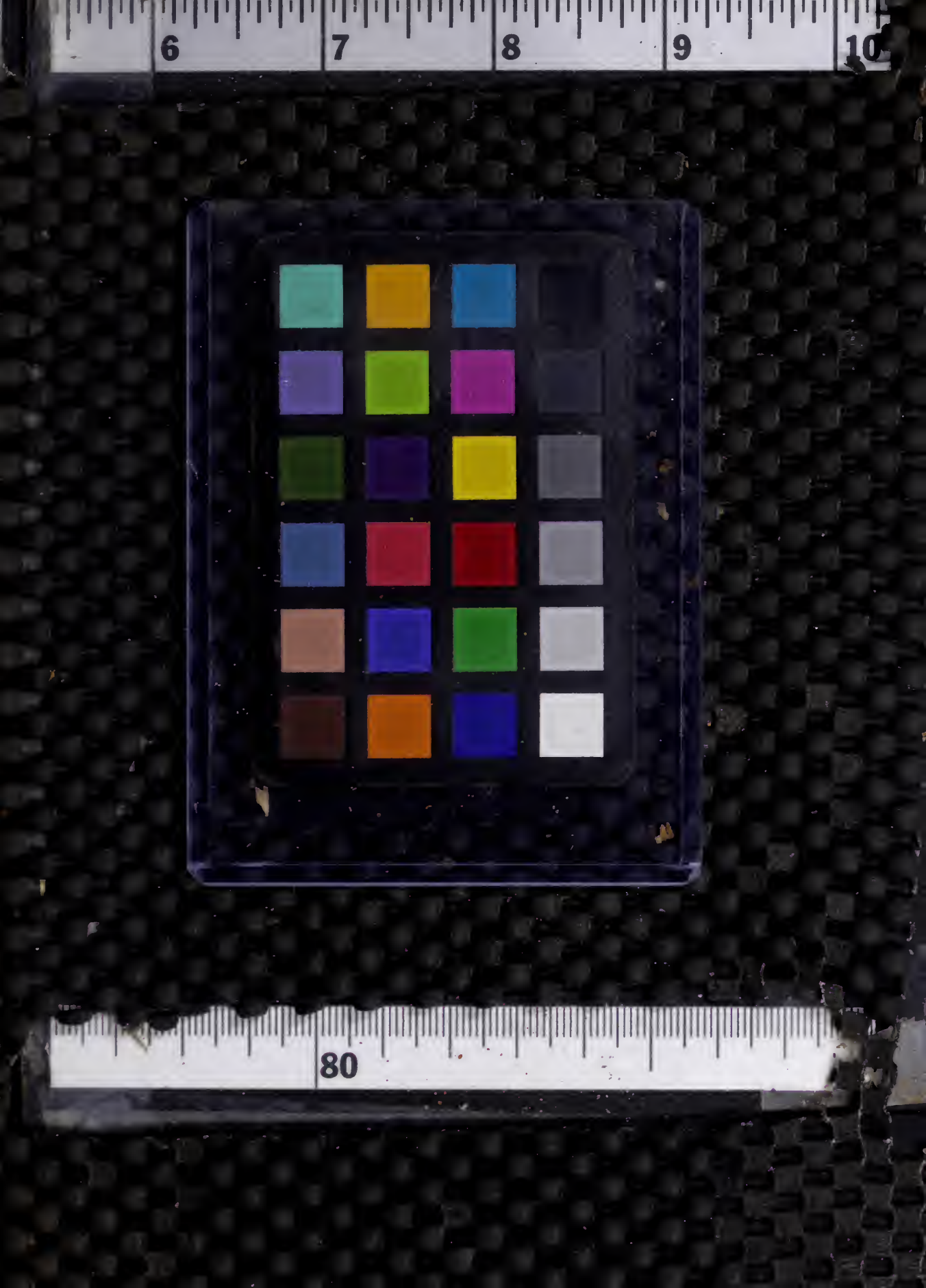
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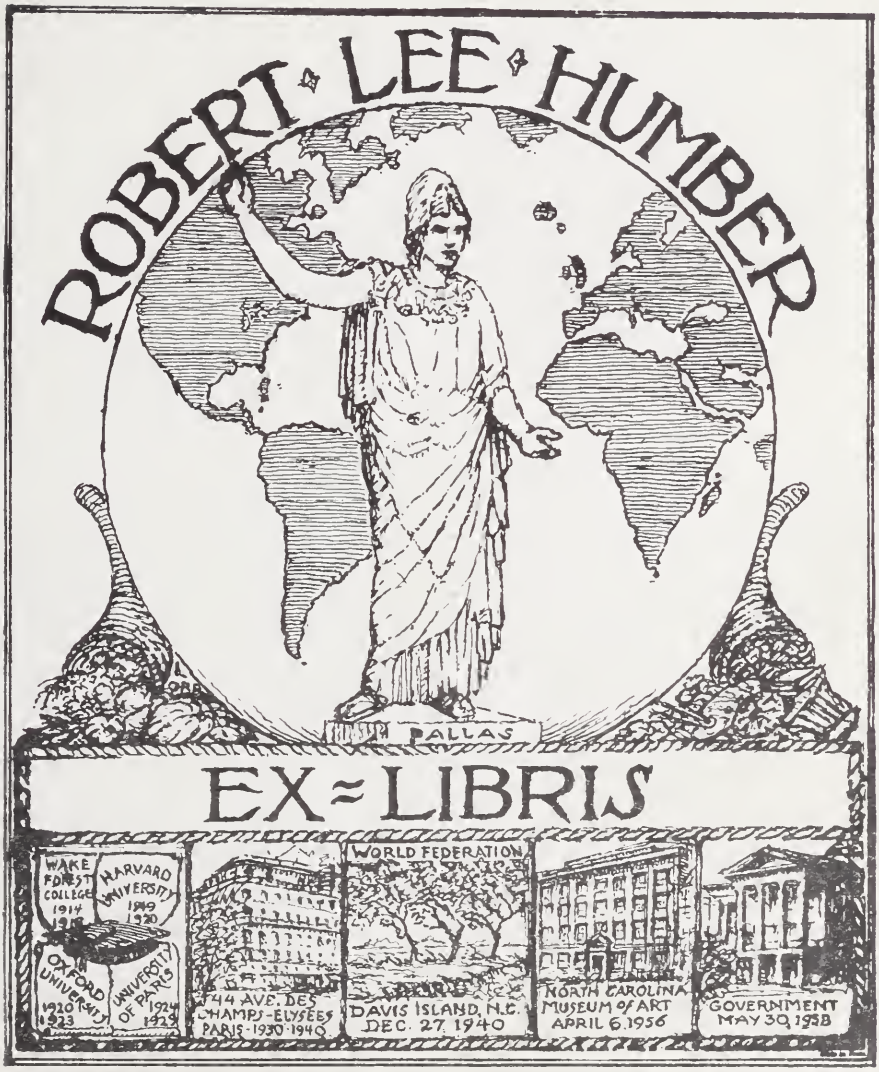
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HE FELL ON ONE KNEE BEFORE THE PRINCESS

Muhlbach "The Reign of the Great Elector."—Vol. Twenty, p. 142

THE WORKS OF

LOUISE MÜHLBACH

THE REIGN OF THE GREAT ELECTOR

FRONTISPIECE IN COLOR FROM PAINTING BY

WARREN Y. CLUFF

NEW YORK

P. F. COLLIER & SON

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THE YOUTH OF THE GREAT ELECTOR.

THE HEIR TO THE THRONE.

BOOK I.

I.—George William, the Elector.

With hasty strides George William, the Elector, paced to and fro the length of his cabinet. His features wore a dark, agitated expression, his blue eyes flashed with indignation and wrath; his hands were folded behind his back, as if he would shut out from sight the paper they held with so firm a grasp, and which he had crumpled within his fist, until it bore greater resemblance to a ball than a letter. Yet he *must* look at it once more—that unfortunate epistle, which had stirred within him such a tempest of fury; he *must* withdraw his hands from his back, and again unfold the paper, for nothing else would satisfy his rage.

"Would that I could thus crush between my hands the insolent, seditious authors of this letter!" he murmured, as with a sigh he smoothed the paper and read it over. "I see it plainly," he said then to himself; "with right unworthy motive, these lords of the duchy of Cleves intend to vex and mortify me. To ask me to give them the Electoral Prince for their stadtholder, to fix his residence among them! That were a fine story forsooth, to send our son away, that he, too, may perchance rebel against us. It is an abominable thing, which I shall never suffer, and I shall forwith give them my mind on the subject."

He stepped up to the great table of carved oak-wood, took from it a silver whistle, and gave a loud shrill call.

"Are the deputies from the duchy of Cleves already in the antechamber?" he asked of the servant who appeared.

"Yes, your Electoral Highness, they are there."

"Let them come in! Be quick!"

The lackey stepped back, threw open the folding doors, beckoned into the entrance hall, and with loud voice announced: "The lords of the duchy of Cleves to wait upon his Electoral Highness."

Four gentlemen entered, attired in gorgeous, richly embroidered uniforms. They bowed low and most respectfully before the Elector.

George William did not acknowledge this reverential greeting by the slightest inclination of his head, but looked with contracted brow and threatening eyes at the envoys, who had now again lifted up their heads, and met with tranquillity and composure the wrathful glances of the lord of the land, while they seemed to await his permission to penetrate farther into the apartment, and to approach him.

But this permission the Elector did not accord them. He left them standing like humble dependents near the door, and went toward them with long, menacing strides.

"You are the lords from Cleves, who have come to present me this memorial in behalf of the estates?" asked George William in a harsh voice.

"Gracious Elector," answered one of the gentlemen, "we were sent hither, in the name of the states of the duchy of Cleves, to present to you in person their wishes and requests. But since your Electoral Highness would not have the kindness to grant us an audience, but referred us to your minister, his excellency Count Schwarzenberg, we have preferred to intrude upon your Electoral Highness with a written document, in order that your highness might be made acquainted with the desires and petitions of the duchy of Cleves by means of our own writing, rather than by the mouth of his excellency your minister."

"It pleases you, gentlemen, to impugn the character of my minister, Count Schwarzenberg?" asked the Elector. "You would insinuate that he might represent things differently from what they actually are? I give you to know,

though, that Schwarzenberg is a servant singularly true and devoted to his Elector, and that I have much more reason to trust him than the estates of the duchy of Cleves, who have dared to make known to me through you their strange requests. I have had you summoned now in order to have confirmed by you orally what is stated in this paper, for it seems to me nothing less than sheer impossibility that the estates should venture to propose to their liege lord what you have proposed. Repeat to me, therefore, by word of mouth the demands of the states of Cleves, then I will return you my answer. Which of you is spokesman?"

"I, Baron van Velsen, your Electoral Highness."

"A Dutch name, as it seems to me."

"My family came originally from Holland, but settled in the duchy of Cleves fifty years ago."

"Speak then, Baron van Velsen. I am ready to hear you."

"Your Electoral Highness, the states of the duchy of Cleves send us to seek succor from you their liege lord in this time of their necessity and distress. On all sides we are oppressed by soldiers, and perpetually in danger of being seized and consumed by one or other of the contending potentates, princes, and lords. In the Netherlands the contest is still going on between the States and the Spaniards, and daily threatens to involve us in the calamities and perils of war, and equally alarming to us is the neighborhood of the Imperial and Swedish troops. Oppressed by all, downtrodden by all, there is only one assured means of deliverance. It is this, that your highness nominate the Electoral Prince stadtholder of the duchy of Cleves, and permit him to take up his residence among the trusty people of Cleves."

"Just tell me, you wise and prudent deputies from Cleves, what advantage can accrue to you from the stadtholdership of the Electoral Prince?" asked the Elector hastily. "And how far would that go in furnishing redress for your difficulties?"

"So far as this, your highness, that our stadtholder would shield and protect us against the encroachments of inimical powers, and by his openly expressed neutrality secure us against the claims of all parties. The salvation of the duchy

depends wholly and solely upon our having a neutral chief resident among us, and we beseech and implore your Electoral Highness to grant us such an one in the Electoral Prince, and to send his lordship your son to the duchy armed with plenipotentiary powers.* It is for the second time that the states of Cleves appeal with this earnest, humble entreaty to the heart of their liege lord, and most urgently we beg that this time we may have a hearing."

"Are you done, or have you anything further to say?" asked the Elector impatiently.

"Your highness, only this have we to say besides, that the Prince of Orange has promised to support our petition to your Electoral Highness, and that he also is of opinion that the welfare of Cleves depends upon her possessing a ruler, resident in the land and neutral."

"The Prince of Orange has only written to me that the states of Cleves were of this mind, and had besought him to introduce it to my favorable notice," exclaimed the Elector warmly. "Since you are now through with your repeated suit, and have nothing more to say, I will give you my answer without delay. But you might have known beforehand—you might have been sure that if a sovereign has once made his subjects acquainted with his wishes and opinions, he can not be influenced and made to swerve in purpose by renewed application, but that he holds to what he has once determined upon. And so I tell you now for the second time, that I can not grant their petition to the states of Cleves. In the first place, because I will not have the Electoral Prince longer separated from me, since he has already been absent from here three years, and in these troublous times we wish to have our son near us. In the second place, the presence of the Electoral Prince in Cleves might not have the wished-for result. It is rather to be feared that those in opposition to the Emperor's majesty and the empire will not accommodate themselves to the strict treaty of peace, nor forbear making aggression upon the Electoral Prince's lands, and pay so little regard to the person and presence of the Prince that his safety

* The exact words of the deputies from Cleves. *Vide* Droysen, History of the Prussian Policy, vol. iii, part 1, p. 175.

perhaps might be imperiled. But, in the third place," continued the Elector with raised voice—" but, in the third place, I can not grant your request because such repeated demands almost force us to the conclusion that you are weary and disgusted with our rule, and therefore would seek to make of our son a sovereign lord, thus inciting the son to offer opposition to his own father." *

" Your Electoral Highness," cried the Lord van Velsen, " I swear that it never crossed our minds, we——"

" Silence! I gave you no leave to speak! " thundered the Elector. " This is now our final decision. We have taken it in ill part that you have reiterated your request, and have even approached the Electoral Prince himself on the subject, as if the son durst decide anything or act, without reference to his father and lord, since he is bound to be an obedient subject, as all the rest of you. Communicate this to the states of the duchy of Cleves, and herewith you are dismissed."

And, without one gracious salutation or further token of dismissal, the Elector turned on his heel, and slowly traversed the spacious apartment, leaning upon his staff. The lords looked after him with dark, resentful glances; then, seeing that he had indeed spoken his last word, they slunk away softly, but with bitter hatred in their hearts.

The Elector heard the door close behind them, and again turned round.

" I have paid them off," he said, drawing a deep breath, " I have told them what I agreed with Schwarzenberg to say. I hope, too, that his Imperial Majesty will hear of this, and recognize in it my purpose to adhere firmly to the terms of the treaty of peace concluded at Prague and to his Imperial Majesty. The Swedes and the Protestant party once renounced, I am the Emperor's friend, and so will abide. Amen! "

Again the door opened, and the old lackey announced: " The deputation from the townsmen of the cities of Berlin and Cologne request an audience with your Electoral Grace."

The Elector gave the order for them to enter, while he let

* The Elector's own words. See F. Forster, Prussia's Heroes in War and Peace, i. p. 15.

himself sink into a high-backed, leather-covered armchair, for his gouty foot pained him.

The deputation of citizens had meanwhile entered, and lightly, on tiptoe, these men, with pale faces and sad countenances, passed through the apartment toward the armchair of the Elector, who sat with his back to them. Quite a strange, dismal appearance they presented, in their long black gowns and broad white collars plaited around the neck. They would have been taken, not for burgers of the two first cities of the land, but for gravediggers and undertakers, who had come here in the discharge of their melancholy offices.

When George William heard the approaching steps of the burgers, he gave his chair a sudden push, so that it turned upon its strong rollers, and thus gave to the men the benefit of his Electorial countenance.

Forthwith the burgers sank upon their knees, and imploringly stretched out their hands toward the Prince.

"Wherefore have you come and what will you have of me?" inquired the Elector in a severe voice.

"Your Electoral Highness, we have been informed by the magistrate that your grace was angry with the corporations of Berlin and Cologne because we ventured, in our anxiety and distress, to have recourse to our own liege lord, and to implore in a petition his support and protection."

"How could you dare to do such a thing? Did you not know that the Count von Schwarzenberg had been appointed by me stadtholder within the Mark, and that to him alone you should have gone with your complaints and grievances?"

"But we knew, besides, that our despair had reached its height, and that we longed for the protection and presence of our own Sovereign, as weak, delicate children long for the sight of a strong, tender parent. Therefore have the united corporations of the cities of Berlin and Cologne determined to send a memorial in writing to your Electoral Highness, to conjure our liege lord not to deal with us as step-children, since we are children of one and the same father, and inferior to the Prussians neither in love nor obedience, but only more visited by misfortune and the calamities of war. But on this account we implored our hereditary Sovereign most graciously

to turn his eye upon us, and to come to our aid, since we stood in such great need of his help and his protecting arm. This, Electoral Highness and most gracious lord, this is our sole crime. We longed after the presence of our Sovereign, in his own most sacred person, and told him so."

"But in what way have you presumed to speak?" cried the Elector with vehemence. "Not as in reverence and duty bound, but as if you would reproach us! What a rude expression is this when you say, in your petition, that you hope we shall no longer leave the Markgraviates as sheep without shepherd, just as if we would hand you over without protection to the free will and power of the enemy? Most probably those honorable citizens, the tailors and shoemakers, drew up this famous writing, but they would have done better to take into their counsel their priest, or at least a schoolmaster, because he could have enlightened them as to the proper style of address for obedient, submissive citizens to assume in writing to their Sovereign. I have always been an indulgent ruler, who continually cared for your best interests. If matters do not go so well with you, it is your own fault, because you would never carry out my intentions, which I made you acquainted with and urged upon you long years ago. For have we not perpetually, ever since God exalted us to the Electoral dignity and invested us with the reins of government, caused to be represented to you and to all the states in the land how highly necessary it was to establish another form of government? Who has it been but yourselves who hindered, obstructed, and opposed it? Now, however, when things go not so smoothly, you lament over it, and demand from me assistance, when in former times your pride always consisted in being wholly independent of us, through your free-city constitutions! Now, then, see what is the result, when a city will be wholly independent of its liege lord and persists in its obstinacy."

"Your Electoral Highness, it has never entered the minds of our citizens to oppose themselves obstinately to the most gracious of sovereigns," protested the spokesman of the burger deputation. "On the contrary, we have always been found ready to obey the behests of your Electoral grace."

"That is not true! That is a lie!" cried the Elector vehemently. "Often have you declined to obey my commands in small as well as great things. I remember yet very well how, when three years ago I came in the summertime from Prussia to Berlin, I was perfectly shocked at the filth and stench in the streets of Cologne and Berlin, where before every house, besides pigstyes, there were heaped high piles of trash and manure. But when I ordered the high council of both cities to have the streets cleansed, they had the hardihood to answer me thus: 'The citizens have no time now to clean the streets, since they are busy with agricultural work.' * And quite recently, when I merely applied to these two capitals for their yearly quota of fifteen thousand dollars, in order to increase my bodyguard from three hundred to six hundred men during these perilous times of warfare, did you not refuse to grant this subsidy to your rightful lord?"

"Your Electoral Highness, that was the result of the extremest affliction and necessity, because we were really in no condition to pay the money. For whence shall we procure it if poverty, want, and affliction are the only things that yet belong to us? Just on that very account, to bring this matter to the hearing of your Electoral Highness, have we been deputed as delegates by the corporations of Berlin and Cologne to wait upon your Electoral Grace, that we might represent our distresses to our Sovereign, and entreat him to forgive us if we are forced to decline contributions of money, for we are unable to raise them. Since this fierce, horrible war has raged in Germany between the Imperialists and Swedes, between the Catholics and Protestants, the cities of Berlin and Cologne have suffered pitiably, and have been levied upon and plundered, sometimes by the Swedes and sometimes by the Imperialists. Before the peace of Prague the Imperialists visited us quite often with cruel robberies and levies, but since the peace of Prague,† it has been yet

* Historical. *Vide* Nicolai, Description of the Capital City Berlin, Introduction, p. 27.

† The peace of Prague was concluded in 1635, and in this the Elector of Brandenburg renounced alliance with the Swedes and assumed a neutral position.

worse, and what we have suffered and endured these past two years is enough to melt a stone, how much more the heart of a pitiful Sovereign. Last year first came the Swedish colonel Haderslof into our town, and levied upon us for sixteen thousand dollars; and hardly had he left when Field-Marshal Wrangel came and demanded twenty thousand dollars besides. Since, however, we were not in a position to pay that sum, he contented himself with a thousand dollars in money, but we had to furnish him in addition with fifteen thousand yards of cloth, three thousand pairs of socks, and as many pairs of shoes, and besides that he had all the cattle driven out of the city. And yet again, a few weeks ago came the Swedish colonel Haderslof, and demanded of us a contribution of eleven thousand dollars. It was impossible, however. We could pay no more, since we had no more gold, and were obliged to receive it almost as a favor that he promised in the compact to accept silver in payment in lieu of gold, and to estimate a half ounce of gilded silver at twelve groschen and a half ounce of white silver at nine groschen. We could do nothing but submit, and each householder and citizen bore all the silverware he possessed to the guildhall, where the Swede had ordered the contributions to be collected. And now, most gracious lord and Elector, now that we are poor and wretched, comes the stadtholder in the Mark, the Lord Count von Schwarzenberg, and requires of the cities of Berlin and Cologne the payment of their annual tax for purposes of defense."

"And you are bound by duty and obligation so to do," exclaimed the Elector quickly. "On the committee day of the year 1626 it was decided that the city of Berlin should annually pay a stipend for defense of eight thousand five hundred dollars, that therewith might be maintained her garrison and the fortress of Berlin. Therefore you are bound and under obligation to pay this assessment at present, for it strikes me forcibly that you were never in greater need of a garrison than just now."

"But may it please your Electoral Highness, our garrison is of no manner of use to us. It is much too inconsiderable to afford protection against the enemy, and is rather hurtful,

insomuch as the soldiers readily fall into quarrels and brawls with our enemies, in which, however, they always come off losers, only embittering still more the hatred of our foes. Therefore, when we have anticipated the approach of the enemy, we have always besieged the commandant of our garrison with entreaties and representations, until he has consented, in order to save us from increased misfortunes, to retire with his garrison from the city, and to march out to Spandow or Brandenburg until the enemy again had taken their departure.* Your Electoral Grace sees therefore that the garrison is of no use at all to us, and yet we must pay a tax for defense."

"Yes, must and shall pay it, for your case is not so bad as you would have us believe. Meantime you have refused to defray the expenses of enlarging my bodyguard; report has reached Königsberg of the proceedings at Berlin and Cologne, and truly wonderful and horrible tidings have been imparted to me by my chancellor, Pruckmann. I know all. I am acquainted with all your doings and actions, and I must say that my heart, yearning as it does over my subjects, has been grieved to learn the abominable godlessness and wickedness of the citizens of my towns of Berlin and Cologne. It is true that you have had to suffer many of the trials and calamities incident to war, but not in the least have you been improved by them or led to repentance. In spite of the necessities of war, you have not forsaken your pride and haughtiness; the women dress themselves extravagantly, and it is really abominable, shameful, and disgusting to behold them in the new French attire, which they call 'la Fontange,' and which leaves the person uncovered almost as far as the waist. They bedizen themselves with finery and flaunt through the streets in velvets and satins. And the men encourage them in it, join in their amusements, and waste their lives in banquetings and feastings. Such disgraceful lives as men must have passed in Sodom and Gomorrah! And although you know the enemy may come again at any moment and levy their contributions upon you, yet you take it not in the least to heart, but continue to lead a merry, luxurious life, have balls

* Historical. *Vide* Nicolai, i, p. 33.

and drinking bouts, spend a wild, heathenish life in eating, drinking, gambling, and other wantonness, deck yourselves out like peacocks, and those who have the least, and carry all their possessions upon their bodies, act worst of all."

"It is desperation, your Electoral Highness, which makes the people of Berlin so mad and wild. Well they know that they can call nothing their own. Why should they save when the Swede comes to-day or to-morrow, and takes from them their last possession? Therefore they prefer to squander upon themselves in desperate merriment, rather than economize and go along sorrowfully, to find that they have only saved for the enemy, who laughs at their misery."

"Now, if you take it so, you might give to me also what I desire and demand, and I would have the citizens of Berlin and Cologne to know through you that I am not minded to abate in the least my requisitions for the payment of the expenses of my bodyguard, and the tax for the maintenance of my Electoral court. You must and shall pay, and in any case it must be preferable, to your desperation, to give your last thing to your Elector and Sovereign, rather than have it stolen and extorted from you by the Swedes. So, there you have my decision, and be off with it and convey it to the citizens of Berlin and Cologne. Attempt not to say anything more now, for I will hear nothing more. You are dismissed, go then!"

"Your Electoral Highness," the spokesman ventured to begin, "I——"

But the Elector would not allow him to proceed. He took up his silver whistle, and with its shrill call overpowered the sound of the burger's words. The door of the outer chamber opened immediately, and the lackey appeared upon the threshold: on the outside, beside the door, were to be seen two of the Electoral lifeguardsmen, standing with shouldered weapons.

"The burger deputation is dismissed," cried the Elector shortly. "Have the doors opened, and let them go out."

The delegates from the oppressed cities ventured not to make opposition; sighing and with heads bowed low they strode through the room. Arrived at the door, they turned

once more and bowed deeply before his Electoral Grace. But George William saw it not, for with an adroit jerk he had again turned his armchair toward his writing table. Meanwhile, although he affected to read the document which he took from the table, his attention was in fact wholly concentrated upon the departing burgers. He listened with a satisfied air as they slowly moved away, and, when the door of the antechamber closed behind them, with a deep-drawn breath deposited the document upon the table.

"They will pay, I am certain they will pay," he said, a triumphant expression flitting across his troubled, peevish countenance. "I have properly frightened them and put them in wholesome dread, so that they will not dare to oppose us longer. Yes, they will pay and thus extricate us from the dilemma in which we find ourselves at present. Ah! what a hard, fearful thing is life, and how little does it fulfil the hopes with which I looked forward to it in the years of my youth! My blessed father was such a fortunate ruler! With him everything was successful. He lived in peace and concord with Emperor and empire, was beloved by his people, and had great prospects for the future, being heir to precious possessions. And when I thus beheld him in the glory and fullness of his power, I thought to myself that it was a glorious destiny to be an Elector, and that a clear sky always shone above the head of a Prince. Yet all at once clouds chased across and darkened this sky, for in Bohemia was kindled the war which soon split Germany into two hostile parties. My blessed father took sides with his brother-in-law, the new King of Bohemia. But then came the battle of the White Mountain, which cost my poor uncle, the King of Bohemia, Frederick of the Palatinate, his land and crown, and drove him forth into misfortune and misery. And the triumphant Emperor threatened all who should succor the conquered sovereign with proscription and the ban of the empire, and whoever should rescue him must cry *pater peccavi*, and penitentially confess to the Emperor and empire. My blessed father did so, but henceforth he might no longer sit upon the throne, which could only remain his through the condescension of the Emperor. He preferred to live independently in

solitude and retirement, devoting himself to the meditations and practices of the reformed doctrines, whose confession he adopted, together with his whole family. So he resigned the government, and gave it to me. Alas! it was a sad heritage, and little enough had I to rule, for misfortune, war, and the Emperor ruled me and my land, so that I soon had my fill of it, and——"

"May we come in?" asked a pleasant voice behind the Elector, interrupting him in his melancholy reminiscences.

"Yes, Lady Electress," he replied, painfully rising from his armchair—"yes, come in and be heartily welcome to your spouse."

II.—Evil Tidings.

The Electress Charlotte Elizabeth closed the little side door which led from her private apartments, and with a friendly nod of the head and tender glances approached her husband, who advanced slowly to meet her.

"Elizabeth," he said, thoughtfully shaking his head, "I see from your countenance that you have something special to say to me. Your brown eyes shine to-day unusually bright and clear, and on your lips rests a happy, tender smile, such as, alas! I no longer observe often in my wife."

"Gladly would I have smiled and looked cheerful, George, but have lacked the opportunity. You know well that we have seldom seen a blue sky above us; it has been always overcast by gloomy clouds. But I beg of you, my lord and husband, to resume your seat, for I see, alas! that your foot is paining you sadly. The fatigues of travel have injured it, and it would indeed be wise if you would at last determine to resort to active remedies, and to that end allow a couple of the learned Frankfort doctors to be sent for."

With an expression almost of alarm the Elector looked upon his wife, who had seated herself on a stool beside him, and soothingly and tenderly laid her hand upon his cheek.

"You have something on your mind, Elizabeth, something

surely," he said, "and it is nothing which can give me pleasure, else you would not use so much circumlocution; but speak it out frankly."

"How?" asked the Electress, "must I have some special object in view, when I smile upon you, and fondle you a little? Know you not that my soul is full of tenderness toward you, and that my heart is ever speaking to you, even when the lips utter not aloud what the heart is whispering within?"

"Elizabeth!" cried the Elector, "now I *know* it; you have received tidings from our son, and vexatious tidings! Yes, yes, that is it! I know those tender looks and beaming eyes; it is not my wife that I recognize in them: it is the mother of our Electoral Prince, Frederick William."

"Ah! what an acute observer you are, George, and how well you understand how to read my countenance! Well, now, you shall have it in all candor. I have news from our dear Electoral Prince."

"He notifies us, I trust, that he has followed our instructions strictly and to the letter, and is now on his way home?" asked the Elector, gazing upon his wife with anxious, inquiring glances.

But Elizabeth avoided his look.

"What!" cried George William angrily, "you do not answer me! You can not, therefore, respond to my questions with a joyful Yes! Can it be possible, then, that the Electoral Prince has disregarded my commands, that——"

"Do not allow yourself to be so excited, George," interrupted the Electress. "First hear his motives and excuses before you grow angry with our son."

"From all those motives and excuses I shall only gather that he will not come," cried the Elector.

"Say rather that he can not come," returned Elizabeth, while she gently forced back her husband, who in his excitement and impatience had made an effort to rise. "Yes, I have letters from The Hague, my dear husband, letters from both our uncle, the Prince of Orange, and my mother, and I dare affirm that these letters have given me heartfelt joy, inasmuch as my uncle the Stadtholder, as well as my mother, write of our dear son that he is an accomplished Prince, in

whom one may reasonably rejoice, and whom we may be proud to call our son. You know, George, that during these three years of his sojourn in Holland, we have ever had good and complimentary accounts of him. His tutor, von Kalkhun, has often reported to us with what diligence our son applied himself to his studies at Leyden, and that he had become quite a learned Prince, in whom even the professors themselves took peculiar delight. Then when he had finished his course of studies at Leyden and went to Arnheim, where he met with the Princes William of Orange and Maurice of Nassau, they could not sufficiently laud the handsome appearance, lofty spirit, and noble heart of our young Electoral Prince."

"Truly," muttered the Elector, "one could infer from your discourse that you are the mother of this highly praised lad. It is an old experience that mothers always find something remarkable in their sons, and if they were to be believed, then would the son of every mother be no ordinary specimen of mankind, but a phœnix among all other men."

"But, my well-beloved Elector, I have nevertheless told nothing but the truth. Our son has been very successful in his studies these last three years in Holland, and has become a very learned and accomplished young man, who is well skilled in Latin and Greek, besides speaking German, French, and Italian in a masterly way. But most especially has he cultivated himself in a knowledge of the science of war, and the Princes of Orange and Nassau certify that he will assuredly become hereafter a great general and warrior, so learnedly and wisely does he even now discourse upon the subject."

"Why do you say all this, Elizabeth?" asked the Elector. "Why do you praise our son, but that you are conscious that he is deserving of censure, and has sinned grievously against us in not having so hastened his return home as to be here now instead of his letters? But that he has already set out on the journey home I can not for a moment doubt, and bitterly should he experience my fatherly wrath if it were not so. Just tell me in short, concise words, when does my son, the Electoral Prince, come?"

"My dear lord and husband," said the Electress with reluctance and visible embarrassment, "would it not be best for you to speak on this subject with the chamberlain, Balthazar von Schlieben——"

"What!" cried the Elector, springing from his seat—"what! Is Schlieben here again—Schlieben, whom we sent to The Hague in order that he might conduct our son hither? He has come back without the Electoral Prince?"

"Yes, my husband, he has come back," replied the Electress, winding her arms tenderly around her husband's neck. "I entreat you most earnestly not to be angry before you have heard the reasons why the Electoral Prince does not come. I entreat you to admit Balthazar von Schlieben, and have an account rendered to you by him."

"Yes!" exclaimed the Elector, vehemently—"yes, I will see him. He shall render me an account. Where is he? They must send for him directly; he must be summoned to me immediately!"

"It is not necessary, George; he stands without there in the little passage leading to my apartments. I shall cause him to enter immediately. You must promise me first, though, my beloved husband, that you will listen to him without reproaches and anger, and that you will say nothing in his presence against the only son given us by Heaven."

"I shall make no promises that I can not keep," cried the Elector warmly. "I will speak with Schlieben. He must come in. Ho! Chamberlain Balthazar von Schlieben, come in, I charge you to come in."

The little arras door opened and disclosed to view a slender, tall young man, in gold-laced blue uniform, with red facings.

"At the command of your Electoral Grace," he said, making a reverential obeisance.

"Come hither, Schlieben," cried George William, "close up to me, that I may see if you are actually he who dares to return here without the one after whom I sent him. So! Look me straight in the face, and tell me why I sent you to Holland three months ago, and what was your errand there?"

"Your Electoral Highness, I was sent by your grace to

Holland, in order that I might conduct hither his Highness the Electoral Prince."

"Well, then, where is the Electoral Prince?"

"Your Electoral Highness, he is at present still at The Hague, and most urgently and most submissively he beseeches your Electoral Highness through me that he may be permitted to remain there at least for the winter."

"He is yet at The Hague!" cried the Elector. "He ventures thus to brave me—to oppose himself to my strict injunctions? Or have you not handed him my letter, Schlieben? Or have you not repeated to him all that I said and urged you by word of mouth to convey to him? Did you not inform him that I ordered him, under penalty of my princely and fatherly displeasure, to set out and journey hither in the speediest manner possible?"

"Your Electoral Highness, I carried out exactly every command given me by your highness, and the Electoral Prince surely would not have delayed an instant gratifying the demands of his revered father, if many concurring circumstances had not made it impossible for him. The Electoral Prince has himself more narrowly pointed out and explained these in this letter, which he has charged me to deliver to your highness."

And with a deep inclination the chamberlain extended a large sealed packet to his Sovereign.

George William took it with angry impatience, and so curious was he to read the contents of the packet that he hastily tore off the cover, the sooner to arrive at its purport. A closely written sheet of fine paper was within the cover, and the Elector unfolded it with eager hands. But after looking at this a long while, he shook his head passionately, and the flush of anger on his countenance grew yet darker.

"What sort of new-fashioned, disrespectful handwriting is this?" growled George William. "This is not at all as if it had been written by a prince's son, but by a scholar who had carefully sought to crowd as many lines as possible into one page in order to save paper. A prince should never renounce or be unmindful of his own dignity. But it is unbecoming, indeed, and unworthy of a prince to write such a

fine hand, as if he were a scholar or a writing master. I can not read these small intricate characters. Read the letter to me, Electress, in short, share it with me from the first."

The Electress took the sheet held out to her, and read it over with hurried glances. "The Electoral Prince uses the most humble, submissive words," she said, finally. "It is just the letter of an obedient and respectful son, who is all anxiety to obey the commands of his father, and who is deeply grieved that he must nevertheless go contrary to them."

"Must?" cried George William. "Be pleased to tell me why he must."

"Only hear, my lord and husband, what the Prince writes about it," said the Electress, and with loud voice she read: "'There are various circumstances which compel me to prolong my stay in this country. In the first place, Admiral Tromp is here, and he is very useful in aiding me to arrive at a more perfect knowledge of nautical affairs, as, also, the condescension and kindness of my uncle, the Prince of Orange, that great general, affords me a glorious opportunity of perfecting myself in the science of war. And I think that, the more I learn and study here, the more capable will I become of serving hereafter under your highness. But, apart from these things, it would be exceedingly difficult at this season of the year and under the present conditions, to make the long journey from The Hague to Prussia; most probably it would consume a half year, and the expenses would be enormous, while next summer I might easily accomplish the journey in two months. The voyage by sea would be next to impossible during this present winter on account of the violent storms, which might occasion tedious delays. Moreover, I dread the privateers of Dunkirk, against which the Dutch convoy could hardly protect me. But yet more formidable seems the journey by land in the existing state of the times. In Westphalia the Hessians and Swedes rove about, rendering the roads unsafe. Even should I take my way over the flats, along the strand, yet the Swedish and Hessian troops could easily catch up with me, and overpower the escort promised me for safe-conduct by the counts of East Friesland and Oldenburg and the Bishop of Bremen.

Or should I bend my course through Upper Germany and Franconia, there, again, other hindrances present themselves, for throughout all these provinces reigns the greatest wretchedness—men even devouring one another for hunger. On that account my uncle, the Prince Stadtholder himself, has opposed my undertaking the journey, considering it too dangerous. A deputation from the duchy of Cleves has also come and begged me to postpone my departure, since they had petitioned your grace anew to leave me in the duchy of Cleves as their stadtholder. And if all this were not so, there is yet another reason which must prevent my departure from here. But this I dare not commit to writing, for a letter may be so easily lost, and to read such a thing would furnish our enemies an occasion of rejoicing and triumph. Therefore I have told all to young Balthazar von Schlieben, and he will in my name faithfully and most reverentially communicate to you, your Electoral Highness and my most gracious father, the true and principal cause which prevents my setting forth from Holland.'"

"Well, speak then!" cried the Elector impatiently. "Speak, Schlieben—what is it?"

"Will not my lord and husband first hear the Electoral Prince's letter to the end?" asked the Electress. "Here follow some cordial, affectionate words, and assurances of the most filial respect and most submissive love."

"Can I value them, yes, can I value any of them all?" answered George William passionately. "When we will prove nothing by deeds, then we make speeches, and when we are disobedient in act, then we asseverate with words of love and reverence. Speak, then, Balthazar von Schlieben, since you have been thus commissioned by the Electoral Prince. What is this most weighty of reasons which forbids the departure of the Electoral Prince from Holland?"

"Your Electoral Highness, it is debt, it is the total want of money."

The Elector started up as if an adder had stung him. "Debts!" he cried in thundering voice. "Want of money! Will this litany never, never cease? What a wild, extravagant life the Electoral Prince must lead to be for ever and

ever wanting money, and no sooner are his debts paid than he contracts new ones!"

"Husband," said the Electress soothingly, "it does not reflect upon the life our son leads that he is out of money, but proves that he has not received a sufficiently ample allowance. Just reflect that three years ago, when he undertook this journey to Holland, you did not give him a red cent, and that I had to give him from my little savings three thousand dollars that he might be able to travel at all.* A considerable portion of this must have been expended during the tedious journey, with his retinue."

"If any one were to listen to you, Electress, he would really suppose that the Electoral Prince had lived upon those three thousand dollars lent him by you from that time up to the present. You forget, however, that, already in the year 1636, therefore the very next year after the Electoral Prince set out upon his journey, the states at the diet of Königsberg voted the large sum of seven thousand dollars to the Electoral Prince for the prosecution of his studies, over which they made a great outcry even then, since the owner of each rood of land must be taxed five groschen to pay for these acquirements, bringing down, no doubt, many a curse upon his Latin and Greek.† From these two sources alone, then, he has had ten thousand dollars to disburse in three years, which for so young a gentleman would surely seem sufficient. Besides, just half a year ago, on his repeated application to me for money, I sent him again one thousand dollars, insomuch as he felt himself compelled to purchase a stately equipage."

"That was the time, husband, when our son went from Leyden to Arnheim, to reside there for a long while. There, of course, he was obliged to have a small household about him, in order to maintain the dignity of his father and his house, for there, too, dwelt the Princes of Orange and Nassau, and our son, the Electoral Prince of Brandenburg, in order not to be surpassed by them, must, like them, hold his court."

"And unfortunately living is very expensive in Holland,"

* *Vide* von Orlich, History of the Prussian State, etc., part 1, p. 34.

† *Vide* von Orlich, History of the Prussian State, etc., part 1, p. 35.

remarked the Chamberlain von Schlieben. "Your Electoral Grace had sent one thousand dollars to the Electoral Prince for the purchase of an equipage, but this sum was by no means adequate. The coach alone cost seven hundred dollars."

"Seven hundred dollars!" cried the Elector, amazed. "How can one pay so much money for a mere wooden box?"

"If it please your highness, the coaches in Holland are not by any means wooden boxes, merely painted, varnished, and gilded a little within and without, having hard leather-covered seats. The Electoral Prince's coach is hung within and without in red velvet and satin, for this custom and usage require of a princely personage in Holland; besides, a set of four horses must be bought, and each of these cost one hundred and forty dollars. Your Electoral Highness sees clearly, therefore, that one thousand dollars could not suffice to cover the expense, for coach and horses alone cost more than that, and now must be added the liveries and harness, besides the wages of coachman, footmen, and lackeys."

"Yes, I see plainly that my dear son leads a stately, extravagant life," cried the Elector. "I see well that it is high time for him to come away from there, and learn that an Elector of Brandenburg must adapt himself to his means, and, instead of riding in a coach drawn by four horses, must drive in a miserable rattle-trap pulled by two paltry beasts. It is therefore full time that the Electoral Prince were withdrawn from the scenes of his pomp and pride, and were taught again to live simply and sparingly. He must and shall return home! Finally, I am sick and tired of this eternal negotiating, this writing to and fro, and it really is high time that this should have an end. For a year already I have been in treaty with the young gentleman concerning his return home, and last of all dispatched my chamberlain to enjoin it upon him as my most decided and express will that the Prince come home, and start forthwith. But he has an obstinate disposition, and sends the Chamberlain von Schlieben back, and tranquilly remain there, where he is so well pleased, living as he does in pomp and luxury, while I have hardly enough money to live along scantily and with the strictest economy."

"But only consider, my dear husband," said the Elec-

tress persuasively—"only consider that it is not from high-mindedness or disobedience that the Electoral Prince tarries in Holland. Indeed, he can not get away while he has no money, and on that very account most urgently appeals to the kindest of all fathers, through the Chamberlain von Schlieben, reverentially begging and beseeching him to extricate him from his difficulties by sending him money enough to pay his debts, and to enable him to travel as becomes his rank."

"Money, and always money!" cried the Elector, almost in a tone of despair. "O God! what a tormented, unhappy man I am! Every one has something to crave of me, and no one anything to give me! When I demand of the states, provinces, cities, citizens, and peasants funds to defray my expenses, then from all sides I hear: 'We have no money; we are so reduced that we can pay no taxes.' And still all these states, provinces, cities, citizens, and peasants demand of me money and support, succor and alms, although they know that I have nothing, for they give me nothing. Money! money! That word has been my tormentor and enemy ever since I began to rule; sleeping and waking that word has pursued me. From all officers, from all subalterns I have heard it, as often as they came near me, and now comes my dear son, too, afflicting and harassing his poor, unfortunate father with this dreaded word. But I shall not suffer him to employ this hated word in his own behalf and turn it against me for his own advantage. I shall not allow him to remain longer at The Hague under pretext that he lacks money to bring him home. He shall have money, yes, he shall have it. I shall see to procuring it. It must be done."

"My dear lord and husband," besought the Electress, "I entreat you not to be so much excited, for it might injure you."

"And I entreat you to leave me now, Lady Electress," said George William impatiently. "It is useless to exhort one to tranquillity and composure, who has so much reason to be roused and provoked. But this fine son of ours shall pay for the vexation and torture that he has prepared for me. He may reckon upon my setting it down to his account,

and not allowing myself to be cheated by empty speeches and by fine actions in word alone. You are dismissed, Sir Chamberlain von Schlieben! Badly enough have you fulfilled my commission, and you may be sure that never again shall you be selected as our messenger and legate!"

"Permit me, my husband, to put in a good word for poor Schlieben!" cried the Electress. "He had no power to bring the Electoral Prince away by force, just as the Electoral Prince himself has no power to leave of his own free will. The whole difficulty consists in our son's having no money."

"Yes, and right welcome is it to him, this time," said the Elector with a bitter laugh. "As he has no money, he continually contracts more and more debts, thereby rendering the payment more difficult, and the longer the delay the longer can the Prince remain in Holland, leading a merry life there. But I shall make an end of it, an end! Schwarzenberg shall come, and he must and will procure me the means. Excuse me, Lady Electress, I have business—pressing business."

"I withdraw, my lord and husband," said Elizabeth, bowing ceremonially, and, turning to the Chamberlain von Schlieben, who was just sliding toward the door with pale, disturbed countenance, she continued: "Sir Chamberlain, follow me! You must tell me more about my dear Electoral Prince and all my dear relatives, whom you have seen and spoken with at The Hague."

The countenance of the chamberlain lighted up, and with a grateful glance he followed the Electress through the side door into her own apartments.

The Elector was alone. His head sank upon his breast, and he stood deeply absorbed in thought. But after a pause he slowly raised his head, and his sorrowful glance fell directly upon the portrait of his father, John Sigismund, whose sad, pale face was turned toward him, with its dark, melancholy eyes.

"Poor father!" murmured the Elector with a heavy sigh, "I understand quite well and easily conceive why you voluntarily laid down your power and retired from the government before death had sent his summons. An Elector of Branden-

burg has by no means a comfortable, pleasant life of it; and a sorely oppressive inheritance have I received from you, so that I, too, might despair, and do as you have done. I, too, might rid myself of the hard task of seeming to be an Elector and reigning sovereign, while I am naught but a poor, much-tormented man, who has more titles than lands, more debts than money, and whose nation consists not of obedient subjects but of obstinate brawlers, a mob of would-be politicians and starved-out people. No! no!" he cried, interrupting himself, "no! I shall not give my son so much joy. I shall not do him the pleasure of yielding up the power to him, and being thrown aside myself like a squeezed lemon. No, Elector I shall remain, and my lordly son shall submit to the paternal will, and return home. Schwarzenberg must provide me with the means. He is the very man for this—he understands it!"

The Elector reached out again for his silver whistle and sounded a shrill call. Immediately one of the outer doors was opened, admitting a lackey. The Elector had already opened his mouth, to issue his commands, when he suddenly grew dumb and looked at the lackey with a still more clouded brow.

"Fellow," he said angrily, "how dare you appear in this presence with such a dress? With your short bearskin jacket and patched hose, you present such a pitiably mean appearance that I am actually ashamed to behold you."

"Pardon, your Electoral Grace," stammered the servant with downcast air, "I can not help it, and I am woefully ashamed myself that I must dare to come thus before my most gracious lord the Elector. A heavy misfortune has happened to my livery coat. I left it hanging on a nail, and tore a fearfully large three-cornered rent in it, on which the court tailor says he will have to stitch a whole day, and even then it may not be presentable after all. The livery coat, therefore, is at the tailor's, which is the reason why I must appear in my jacket."

"You should have put on another coat," cried the Elector, impatiently, "for it is contrary to respect that you should enter in such shabby style."

"Another coat?" asked the lackey, with an expression of the highest astonishment. "Pardon, your Electoral Highness, I have only that one coat!"

"What!" exclaimed the Elector. "Only *one* coat! Did I not order that new livery coats should be made for you lackeys before our removal from Königsberg?"

"It was done, your Electoral Grace, we received our new livery coats before we left Königsberg."

"Well, then, where are the old ones?"

"Your Electoral Grace, the master of the wardrobe sold the old ones to the Jews at Königsberg, who paid him a good sum of money for them, for the old livery coats were trimmed with genuine gold lace, but the new ones are cheaper, for it is only gilt or——"

"Hold your tongue and begone!" cried the Elector. "If you have no coat, then from to-day I dispense with your services, and Jocelyn shall take your place."

"Forgive me, your Electoral Highness, but Jocelyn is in confinement. The master of the wardrobe had him put in the guardhouse three days ago."

"Wherefore then—what has Jocelyn done that the master of the wardrobe should have him put into prison?"

"He was obstinate, your highness. The paymaster has not distributed to us our wages for two months, so that none of us has a groschen in his pocket. When we reached Berlin, three days ago, Jocelyn found his old mother miserably sick and well-nigh starved, for the Imperialists have thoroughly pillaged Berlin, and robbed the old woman of her last possession. She had nothing to eat, and still less could she afford to send for a doctor and buy medicines. So, in his desperation, Jocelyn went to the paymaster and begged of him his month's wages, but was told that he could have nothing now, because the journey from Prussia here had cost so much money that all the coffers were empty; but that in the course of eight days the paymaster might be in funds again, and that then we should all have what was due us. But, on account of his old mother, Jocelyn could not wait, and so in desperation went off and sold his new livery coat to an old-clothes man, and carried the money to his mother. And for that reason,

your Electoral Grace, poor Jocelyn now sits in the guard-house."

The Elector had turned away, and gazed from the window down into the pleasure garden, the branches of whose green trees nearly touched the windows of the apartment. He could no longer meet the glance of the lackey Conrad; he would not have him witness his mortification and the painful twitchings of his mouth. But after a while he turned again to old Conrad, who had crept softly toward the door, not venturing to go out without permission from his master.

"You see well, old man," said the Elector confidentially, "that our affairs are not in so prosperous a condition as formerly when you entered my service, and were the body servant of the merry, cheerful young Electoral Prince. Now that Electoral Prince has become a very sad, serious, and poverty-stricken Elector, who has lived through much affliction, and must content himself, despite his glorious title, with being a poor tormented man, and therefore also a peevish man. I was once otherwise; that you know But debts make the wildest tame and the most joyous fretful, as you see in me, old Conrad. But now listen!"

He stepped to his writing table and drew forth a long purse with meshes of green silk and gold. Carefully counting, he shook some money out of the purse into his hand and then handed it to Conrad.

"Conrad, there are twelve dollars. Do you know the Jew to whom Jocelyn sold his livery coat?"

"Yes, I know him, your highness."

"Then go, Conrad, and buy back the coat. How much did the Jew pay for it?"

"Six dollars, your Electoral Highness."

"Return him five dollars for it, and tell him that the dollar subtracted is by way of punishment for his having dared to purchase the coat of one of the servants belonging to the electoral household, for he must know that it is not the lackey's but electoral property. But if the Jew ventures to grumble, then say to him that I shall have him watched and his false dealings inquired into. When you have obtained the coat, carry it to the master of the wardrobe, and tell him

to release Jocelyn from the guardhouse and permit him to wear his coat again. Say to him that it is my command. And now go and attend to this matter for me."

"Forgive me, your Electoral Grace, but I know not yet what to do with the rest of the money. When I shall have redeemed Jocelyn's coat with five dollars, there will yet remain seven dollars besides, and I beg of your highness to point out what disposition I must make of them."

"What wages do the lackeys receive by the month?"

"One rixdollar and four groschen, your highness!"

"That makes four dollars and sixteen groschen owing to you and Jocelyn, since the paymaster is in your debt for two months' wages. There will still be a remainder of two dollars and eight groschen, which you must give to Jocelyn to take to his old mother, not, however, as if it came from me, but as his own gift."

"Ah! your Electoral Highness, what a kind, gracious master you are!" cried Conrad, with tears in his eyes. "Only extend this one act of goodness and condescension: permit your old Conrad to kiss your hand and thank you for the favor your highness has shown to Jocelyn and myself, and be not offended at your old servant for asking such a thing, since it is only out of love and hearty respect."

"I know it, Conrad, I know it," said the Elector, reaching out his hand to the old man, and permitting him to press it to his lips. "I know your good, faithful heart, which has never swerved from its duty these twenty years that you have been in my service. Go now, old man, and do as I have bidden you. But hear! No one need know that I have paid you and Jocelyn your month's wages, for then they would all come to be paid by me; and the paymaster was quite right—our coffers are empty, and we must take account of everything until they are filled again. Keep silent, then, both of you. I shall tell the paymaster myself that I have just meddled a little in his affairs.

"But now, hear one thing more, Conrad. Go straightway across into Broad Street, to the house of his excellency the Stadtholder in the Mark, Count von Schwarzenberg. We request his excellency to take the trouble to come immediately

to us. Say from me that we have weighty business to transact with him that admits of no delay. Therefore, we entreat his excellency to come hither forthwith."

"Pardon, your highness," said Conrad, anxiously and confusedly; "my dresscoat is still at the court tailor's. Must I go across in my jacket? At the Stadtholder's everything is so fearfully fine and stately. The lackeys, too, put on such airs that an electoral lackey can not stand up to them at all; they are, besides, haughty, supercilious fellows, who think themselves very grand, and fancy they are something quite uncommon, and almost more than one of us, who are court lackeys to your highness. Would it not make the fellows rejoice to see me in this jacket and——"

"Never mind; go across in your jacket," said the Elector, laughing. "Remember always that you are the servant of the master, and those spruce fellows but the lackeys of the servant, although I must say that the servant is a much richer, more magnificent man than his master. Run and bring the Stadtholder to me!"

III.—Count Adam von Schwarzenberg.

"I THANK you. Master Gabriel Nietzel, I thank you with my whole heart, for you have indeed prepared me a great pleasure," cried Count Adam von Schwarzenberg, at the same time nodding pleasantly to the young man who stood beside him. Then he was lost again in contemplation of the picture before which they both stood, and which was mounted upon an easel in one of the deep bay windows of the lofty apartment.

"I well knew that my most gracious lord would take pleasure in this glorious work of art," said Master Gabriel Nietzel, smiling, "and therefore have I spared neither expense, toil, nor danger in bringing to your excellency this noble painting of the great Italian master."

"And I am astonished that you have succeeded, master,"

exclaimed the count, changing his position before the picture, in order to examine it in a new light, from a different point of view.

"Most gracious sir, if I had had in the box which I guarded so closely hams or other edibles, instead of this picture, or even articles of clothing or munitions of war, then surely I should have failed in bringing it here from Italy, considering all the bands of soldiers and robbers who fly through the German empire now, like a swarm of bees, and like locusts leave in their train, wherever they alight, want and wretchedness."

"Yes, yes," cried Count Schwarzenberg, with a short, peculiar laugh, "right ill things look throughout this holy German empire; poverty, war, and pestilence are the locusts of which you speak, and—— But why do you remind me of these unpleasant things? Let me enjoy one quarter of an hour's refreshment and joy. Let me forget care for just a little while, and feast my eyes upon the sight of this glorious woman!"

"It is a Venus," said Master Gabriel with diffidence, "the so-called Venus with the Mirror. Master Titian has twice painted this design, only that in one picture two Cupids appear, while the other shows only one Love."

"Very naturally," laughed the count. "When the great Titian painted the first picture one Love only existed, while at the second representation a second Love had arrived for the beautiful woman, to her own ineffable delight and that of her beloved Master Titiano Vecellio."

"Pardon, your excellency," remarked Master Gabriel, "indeed the painting represents a Venus."

"There you are now, poor child of man," cried Schwarzenberg, laughing aloud, "so properly reserved and so affectedly modest! A mere woman in her primitive beauty would wound your sense of propriety, and you would not venture to look at her, but a goddess has permission to appear without earthly clothing, and you dare, casting reserve aside, to lift your eyes to her glorious form. And besides, in your humility and modesty, you think that a woman of such godlike shape may not be found upon earth, therefore you exalt her

to the gods, and therefore you call her a Venus, who is only the most voluptuous, beautiful, and charming of women."

With upraised finger Master Gabriel pointed toward the naked little boys who, exquisitely fair, stood behind Venus and held her mirror for her.

"That is an angel, as your grace sees, for he has wings upon his shoulders," he said, timidly.

But Count Adam von Schwarzenberg hastily took the master's finger and directed it to another part of the picture.

"It is a woman," he cried, laughing, "for she has flung a covering around her hips, and you can never make me believe that Venus upon Olympus wore velvet edged with ermine. But let us quit this strife! A beautiful woman is always a goddess, and he who would not acknowledge that would be a real heathen and barbarian. I will therefore comply with your wish, and entitle this wondrous woman a Venus. And I keep her, your Venus. Name the price, master, and you shall immediately receive your pay."

"I paid two thousand ducats for the painting in Cremona, where I had the good luck to discover it, on my return from Rome," replied Master Gabriel Nietzel, with anxious countenance and timid manner, as if he dreaded an explosion of wrath on the part of the count, who was everywhere recognized and decried as avaricious and greedy of gain. "Add to that two hundred ducats to cover my bare outlay for the packing and freight. The rest, which concerns my trouble and need, and the perils I endured when we, that is to say, Venus and I, were seized by bands of soldiers and ransomed—all this can not be calculated, and in humility I leave it to your grace to compensate me as you may see fit."

"Two thousand ducats for the picture, two hundred for expenses incurred! A tolerably high price, indeed, for a little piece of painted canvas!" cried the count, with a smile. "For that amount a whole regiment of Brandenburg soldiers might be armed and equipped, to aid the Elector in conquering his dukedom of Pomerania. But what is that dirty, clown-trodden, commonplace Pomerania in comparison with this heavenly woman, or, if you prefer, this earthly Venus. Go, Master Gabriel, go directly to my treasurer, and get him to count

out to you three thousand ducats. Eight hundred ducats for your toil and danger. Are you content, master?"

"Your excellence, you pay like the greatest of lords and emperors!" cried the painter, with joy-beaming countenance. "You make me forever your debtor, and so long as I live I shall be ready to serve you."

"Now, if you mean that in earnest, Gabriel, an opportunity presents itself at this very time."

"Try me, your excellency, give me a commision, however difficult, and my most gracious lord shall be forced to admit that I have executed it most faithfully and valiantly."

"Now listen, then, master! I herewith constitute you my agent; I take you into my pay and service. Were I a reigning prince, then I should say, I make you my court painter; but being only the little Count Schwarzenberg, the——"

"Stadtholder in the Mark," interrupted Gabriel, with ready glibness of tongue, "Grand Master of the Order of St. John, first counselor and minister of the Elector of Brandenburg, president of the electoral counsel of state, lord and owner of many lands and estates, count of the empire, and——"

"Silence, silence! enough of that!" exclaimed the count, waving him off. "It is with me, as with the Elector. We both have manifold titles, but they bring us in little enough, and no money appertains to them. You have sketched me graphically, master; be quiet now, and listen to me again in silence. I therefore take you into my pay and service, and give you from this day forward an annuity of five hundred dollars, which will be delivered to you quarterly. Hush, hush! do not speak! I read a question in your eyes and features, and I will forthwith supply the answer. Your question runs, What have I to do for this annuity? And the answer is, Travel about in the world as a free man to hunt up pictures, and when they are worth it, to purchase them for me. But above all things, to tell no one that you are in my service, but to keep this as a secret between us two. Pictures you must buy for me; that is all you have to do, master. But some-

times you must allow me to dictate to you—where to journey in quest of my pictures. For example, now: You have been in Italy, prosecuting your studies there, and have opportunely brought home to me, thence, a Venus, because I desired you to make a few purchases for me. You have seen how delighted I was with the beautiful picture, but, on the whole, I have taken a greater fancy to landscapes and representations of comedy, and the Flemish painters are the ones I peculiarly admire. There are the Teniers, father and son, who have painted the most charming and amusing country scenes and comic pieces, and there is another young man, Wouvermann by name, who is said, although youthful in years, to possess great talents, and to understand not merely how to paint splendid clowns, but battle scenes as well. Now, I should like of all things to possess a couple of pictures by each of these three painters, and since the Teniers lived at Amsterdam and The Hague, and Wouvermann now resides at The Hague, I wish you to go to The Hague and make a few purchases there for me. But, mark well, without saying that you come there in my employ, or that you have a contract with me. I should much prefer your assuming the appearance of belonging to my enemies, and sounding in unison with them the trumpet of abuse."

"Your excellency, how could I venture it, and how can you require of my grateful heart, that it so belie itself, and allow my lips to speak other than words of gratitude and reverence?"

"I empower you so to do, Master Gabriel Nietzel, yes, I require it of you, that you carry such words upon your lips, especially if you are in the presence of the Electoral Prince Frederick William."

"The Electoral Prince?" asked the painter in astonishment. "Your excellency will send me to the Electoral Prince at The Hague?"

"On the contrary, you shall act before him as if you hated me, and belonged to the party of my opponents. But you must by all means reach the Electoral Prince, must seek to remain in his neighborhood, and to gain his confidence. You are a lively fellow, and have studied life at its fountains in

Italy. The Electoral Prince loves gay company, and you may impart to him a little of your knowledge of life, and teach him that youth must enjoy without scruple or reserve. Be his *maître de plaisir*, Master Gabriel; lead him into the temple of art, and teach him that each fair woman is a Venus, a goddess, and therefore deserving of his worship. You are a clever painter, and also, as I have heard from Rome, know well how to sip of life's sweets; and these are two fine talents, which you must convert into money. For this purpose I send you to Holland. You are to buy pictures for me and to help the Electoral Prince to while away the hours and enjoy life. I shall rejoice if you succeed, and it would be agreeable to me for you to transmit to me exact accounts, every week, of your efforts, and of the life you lead there with the Electoral Prince. You can write, Master Gabriel Nietzel?"

"Yes, I can write; but——"

"Well, what signifies that *but*, and wherefore do you look all at once so gloomy and so cross? Peradventure my commission does not please you?"

"No, your excellency, it does not please me, and I can not undertake it!" cried Master Gabriel, indignantly. "You send me to The Hague, not as a painter, but—let me call the thing by its right name—but as a spy, and, what is yet more, as the corrupter of the Electoral Prince!"

"And that pleases not your virtue and your honesty?" asked the count, shrugging his shoulders. "Well, good then, dear master! Stick to it! Let all that we have said to one another be unsaid. Remain an honorable, independent hero of virtue, paint pictures, and see to it that you sell them, and if you do not succeed, then be contented to paint signboards for merchants and their walls for burghers, and console yourself with this, that you have refused a higher career from principles of virtue and magnanimity. Take your Venus, Master Champion of Virtue; I had not commissioned the purchase, and she is too dear for me. We are released from our mutual obligations, and have nothing more to do with one another. Go!"

"Will not your excellency keep the picture?" asked Nietzel, shocked; great drops of agony standing upon his pale

brow. "Will not your excellency indemnify me for all my labors and expenses, and shall I go from you with——"

"With the proud consciousness of your virtue," said the count, completing his sentence for him. "Yes, that you shall, Master Gabriel. You shall bear in mind that Count von Schwarzenberg would have taken you into his service, and that you declined it, thereby exciting his wrath a little, which, as I have been told, has seldom turned to the advantage of those who have roused it, but always to their injury. However, you care nothing for that; you defy the wrath of the Stadtholder in the Mark, you——"

"No farther, please, your excellency, no farther!" cried out Gabriel, pale as death. "Forgive my excitement and my struggles. I pray you to forget my improper words, and accept me for your humble and obedient servant. You must do me the favor to keep the Venus of Master Titiano Vecellio, for she is my only possession, and I have given away my whole property in her purchase."

"Speak more clearly, master!" cried the count. "You mean to say I must keep your copy of the Venus, and pay for it as if it were an original one, for on that you base all your hopes."

"Your excellency!" stammered Master Gabriel in terror, "you do not suppose——"

"That this painting here is a copy, which you executed, and afterward hung up a couple of days in the chimney, to give it the appearance of a picture an hundred years old? Yes, my good man, I do indeed suppose so, and willingly grant you my testimony to the effect that you have very faithfully copied Titian, and expended much toil and trouble upon it."

"Most gracious count, I swear to you, that I have been slandered—that——"

"Swear no oath," said the count earnestly and severely. "You did not buy this picture at Cremona, but copied it in the palace Grimani at Venice, and worked upon it three whole months. You see I am well informed, and have my friends everywhere who furnish me with intelligence, and regard it as an honor to be my—spies, as you would say."

"Mercy, gracious lord, mercy!" cried Nietzel, bursting

into tears, and sinking upon his knees before the proud, lofty form of the count. "Pardon for my crime, for my presumption! I was in such great want and distress that I knew not how else to help myself, and I swear to you that my copy is so faithful and exact that it can not be distinguished from its original."

"Well, no matter; we shall hang it up as an original, and allow it to be inspected by the connoisseurs of the electorate," said the count, laughing. "I keep your Titiano Vecellio, Master Nietzel, and consequently pay you three thousand ducats for this excellent original. That you may see how much in earnest I am I will immediately give you an order upon my treasurer, and you may forthwith receive that sum."

He approached his writing table, rapidly dashed off a few words upon a strip of paper, and then handed it to the painter. "There, take it, Master Gabriel Nietzel, and collect your money."

The painter gave him a long, astonished gaze. "You forgive me, your excellency," he said; "you accept my high estimate, although you know that I have cheated you and that this is only a copy?"

"What difference does that make? The picture is beautiful, and it gives me pleasure to look at it, and that is the only thing, after all, that I can require of a painting."

Master Nietzel hastily seized the count's hand, and pressed it to his lips. "Most gracious sir," he cried, "you have purchased my Venus with your money, my heart with your magnanimity! Henceforth I am yours, body and soul, and it is just, as if——"

"As if you had leagued yourself with the devil, is it not?" laughed the count.

"No, as if I had no longer any other will than yours—that is what I wished to say, most gracious lord. Only command me, say what I must do, and it shall be done."

"You go, then, to Holland, and purchase pictures there for me, and study the Flemish painters?"

"I will go to Holland, your excellency."

"You will seek to gain access to the Electoral Prince, to acquire influence over him, and to cheer him up a little?"

"I shall do as your grace directs."

"You will send me weekly a written statement of all that you see and hear there?"

"I shall send you a written statement," replied Gabriel, with downcast eyes and a hardly suppressed sigh.

The count saw it and smiled contemptuously. "You will write these reports to me in ciphers, which I shall acquaint you with, and swear to me that you will give the key to these ciphers to no human being?"

"I swear it, your excellency."

"Now, since you are so docile and obedient, my dear Master Gabriel, I shall raise your salary. I had promised you an annuity of five hundred dollars—I shall now make it six hundred dollars. Hush! no word of thanks; I can imagine them all or read them in your countenance, and that satisfies me. Only one thing remains to be decided. From whom will you receive letters of recommendation to the Electoral Prince?"

"Your excellency, I believe the Electress will have the kindness to furnish me with a letter of recommendation to her son. Her most gracious highness is very favorably inclined toward me because I painted from memory a miniature of the Electoral Prince, and presented it to her. Since then she has been very condescending to me, and never refuses me admittance to her presence, and I may as well acknowledge to your excellency that a few days ago the Electress hinted at the probability of a position being offered me as electoral court painter."

The count laughed aloud. "I congratulate you, master, and especially upon the salary which will be attached to the office. Only do not be puffed up and reject the little I have offered you, which you can always draw in secret, even when you have become electoral court painter. It is well for affairs to stand thus just at this juncture, for it will be easy for the electoral court painter to gain access to the Electoral Prince, and to be received into the number of his household. Repair to the Electress forthwith, tell her that you wish to travel to Holland in order to prosecute your artistic studies there, and come to me early to-morrow morning and acquaint me with

the result of your audience. Farewell, Master Gabriel; go first to my treasurer and then to the Electress. No, no, say nothing more; no protestations, no word of thanks. I know you—that is enough."

With proud, courtly mien he nodded to the painter in token of dismissal, waved his hand toward the door, and then seated himself in the window niche beside the Venus, turning his back to the room.

Abashed and humiliated, Gabriel slunk away, and not until the sound of the closing door gave warning of his departure did the count turn around. His gaze was fixed upon the Venus, who in her wanton beauty met his looks with dark, flashing eyes.

"You have cost me much, fair signora," he said, shrugging his shoulders. "Three thousand ducats for a copy! Who knows whether Titiano Vecellio was paid more for his original in his own time? Ah! you poor, beautiful woman, how dismal and cheerless it will seem to you in the cold north, and how much you will miss the golden light of your sunny Italian home here in this dirty northern Mark! We two must console one another, and try to forget that we do not live in your own fair Italy, but here, here, where there is more rain than sunshine, and where in place of music we often hear nothing but the grunting of swine and the bleating of sheep!"

And, as if in confirmation of his words, just then was heard from the street a loud tumult, a confused discord of grunts and squeals. The count turned from the Italian beauty, and looked out into the street, or, rather, the great square fronting his palace.* The rain, which had streamed down incessantly for a few days past, had drenched the unpaved ground, and here and there, where the soil was impermeable to moisture, had formed puddles and pools. These, the sheep and hogs, which were ensconced in stalls before the houses, had chosen for their pleasure ground, and whole herds of

* This palace of Count Schwarzenberg was situated on Broad Street, and the open square in front of it was where now stand the houses of the so-called Stechbahn. In the middle of this square stood the cathedral, and behind this, near the Spree, arose the electoral castle. It is the spot where the King's apothecary now has his stand.

them had come to bathe in these puddles before Count Schwarzenberg's palace and in the neighborhood of the cathedral. A few merry, naughty boys, attracted by their squealing and bleating, likewise ventured into the black sea of the cathedral square, but, finding that they forthwith sank in the same, they had called for help, shouting, screaming, and laughing, thereby attracting still other boys and idlers, who now with prudent caution stood on certain less saturated spots, and with shrieks of mockery and laughter watched the vain efforts of the sunken boys, who were striving to work themselves out of the morass. Such was the melancholy picture that presented itself to Count Adam von Schwarzenberg, and he gazed upon it with sad and gloomy looks.

"And this is the residence of the Stadtholder in the Mark!" he sighed—"the outlook of von Schwarzenberg, count of the empire! Oh! it shall be otherwise! Out of this pigstye Berlin, I will construct a neat and handsome residence for myself, from this miserable house a splendid palace shall spring forth, and all the arts and sciences shall find their patron in the lord commanding in the Mark, when he is no longer merely called Stadtholder, but——"

He looked anxiously behind him, as if he dreaded being overheard by some one. "Hush!" he murmured then, "be still! There are thoughts and plans which may never find expression in words, but, like Minerva from the brain of Jupiter, must come forth ready for action, spear in hand. Creep back into my heart, and never let it be perceived that you are there, until the right hour shall come, the hour——"

He was silent, and again glanced searchingly around. Then, taking the silver whistle from his writing table, he let ring forth a shrill, loud call. A lackey in rich livery, its original material totally hidden beneath a mass of golden trappings and silver lace, appeared in the doorway.

"Who is in the antechamber?" asked the count, casting a long, last glance upon the Venus, and then covering her again with the green stuff that hung at the corner of the frame.

"Most gracious excellency, both entrance halls are

crammed quite full of men of every rank and calling, for this is the hour for public audience."

"Are many uniforms present?"

"If you please, your excellency, very many. Besides General von Klitzing and Colonel Conrad von Burgsdorf, the Colonels von Rochow and von Kracht are there."

"These four gentlemen must be admitted to me," ordered the count. "The other people had better go, for I have no time to-day to grant audiences. Well, why do you stand there loitering? Why do you not go?"

"Most gracious sir," entreated the lackey, "there are so many distinguished gentlemen there, who have already come so often in vain, and to whom I have promised an audience to-day, in accordance with your excellency's express command."

"Who, for example?"

"For example, your excellency, the councilors of the cities of Berlin and Cologne, then the states of the duchy of Cleves, and——"

"Enough, enough! I see well that these lords have paid you to put me in mind of them, and I shall therefore have the complaisance to do honor to your intercession."

"Alas! most gracious lord, I swear to your grace, that nobody has paid me, that——"

"Silence! I know you all!" cried the count contemptuously. "I know that every audience day brings as much money to you lackeys as it prepares discomfort and weariness for me. Pocket your money quietly, honest Balthazar; you are no worse than all the rest of the servant brood and therefore I despise you no more than the rest. Go, conduct hither the military gentlemen named through the corridor, and meanwhile I shall take a walk through the audience chamber and you collect your pay."

The gold-bedizened lackey left the cabinet with reverential and submissive air. But outside, he remained standing before the closed door, and boldly lifting up his head, with wholly altered face, hurled a look of hatred and defiance at the door.

"No worse than all the rest of the servant brood!" he muttered, raising his fist in a threatening manner—"no worse

than yourself, you should have said, proud lord. You receive bribes as well as we, take money wherever you can get it, lend upon pledges, and practice usury like any Jew! Ah! we know you, haughty count, the whole Mark of Brandenburg knows and detests you, and it is a sin and shame that we must bow down before the Catholic alien, the foreigner, the imperialist, the priest-ridden slave, and it is a dreadful misfortune that the Elector himself bows down before him, and acts as if Schwarzenberg were lord here, and he a mere servant. Well," he comforted himself, letting his fist drop, "I can not alter it, and father says what we can not alter we had better submit to, and profit by a little, if we can. I will now guide these gentlemen bullies to the count's cabinet."

Count Adam von Schwarzenberg had meanwhile opened the door to his little private antechamber, and caused to enter his officiating equery and chamberlain, von Lehndorf, as also his two pages in waiting.

"Lehndorf," he said, "what think you? Would it be possible to arrange a small hunting party for to-day?"

"Most gracious sir," returned the chamberlain joyfully, "the weather seems just made for that. A clear, bright October day, and the does and stags in the park deserve that a couple of dozen of them should be shot down, for they have grown so bold that they hardly show any longer their wonted fear of man. Would your excellency believe that yesterday four does, under the guidance of a powerful buck, were pleased to issue forth from the park behind the castle and promenade a little in the worshipful towns of Berlin and Cologne? Such a screaming as there was of the street boys, who pursued the beasts, such a grunting of hogs, into whose styes the does sprang without respect, and such a running of honorable city women, who were struck with fear of being maltreated by the horned animals, who were nevertheless not their husbands, and such a yelping of noble butcher dogs, which probably took the does for calves gone mad! I swear, your excellency, it was divine sport."

"You are a blustering fellow yourself," laughed the count, "and 'Who loves to dance, ne'er lacks the chance.' If you are thus minded, we shall have a little hunt to-day, and take

it upon yourself to invite for us a few worthy and suitable gentlemen who have fine horses and dogs."

"And will not your grace to-day, in this beautiful weather, grant these gentlemen the pleasure of seeing the two new greyhounds run? They have been here eight days already, and might as well display a little of their skill for the heavy sum of money they have cost."

"Yes, that is true—a heavy sum of money they cost indeed," said the count. "My son writes me that he paid eight thousand dollars for these two greyhounds." *

"But they are worth it, your excellency," cried the chamberlain, quite enthusiastically. "They are two wonderful animals, who have not their match in the wide world. I am quite in love with them, and if I had wife or ladylove, would gladly give her for these two greyhounds."

"Yes, yes, many an one would relish making payments in this fashion," laughed the count. "It is easier to give a wife away than eight thousand dollars, and again she is easier to obtain than such a superior greyhound. Hurry now, Lehndorf, and arrange the hunt for me. Let the servants put on their new red hunting suits and my huntsman also his new livery, that the curious Berlin people may have something to gape at. Away with you, Lehndorf! You, pages, take the baskets, now I am off for the audience hall."

Both pages, in suits of gold-embroidered velvet, rushed into the little antechamber, and quickly returned, each one bearing a pretty, shallow basket in his hand. Behind them came the chamberlain, who threw across the count's shoulders his ermine-lined velvet mantle, and put into his hand his plumed hat, trimmed with gold lace, and his embroidered gloves. The count hastily placed the tall, pointed hat with its nodding plumes upon his dark, curly hair, in which showed here and there a few silver streaks, and grasped the long gloves firmly in his right hand, sparkling with brilliant rings.

"Open the doors!" he said authoritatively, and the chamberlain flew before him, and tore open both halves of the folding doors. The two halberdiers, who stood near the door on the other side, raised their halberds, and proclaimed with

* A historical fact. *Vide* von Orlich.

thundering voices, "His excellency and grace, count of the empire and Stadtholder in the Mark!"

Through the two long apartments, on both sides of which was ranged a dense crowd of people of all sorts—men and women, venerable magistrates in solemn robes of office, and soldiers in their uniforms, poorly clad citizens and fine-dressed gentlemen, bold-looking young ladies and respectable matrons in white garbs of widowhood—through both these long apartments flew, as it were, one sigh, one joyful breath of relief and surprise, and all faces, the sad and bright, the eyes reddened by wine and night watches, as well as those sparkling with avarice and passion, all turned toward the lofty, full form of the Stadtholder, who, so proud and so brilliant, so august and self-conscious, stood upon the threshold of the door. He gave no salutation; not in the least did he incline his head, but with one sharp look let his large, gray eyes glide up and down on both sides; and this look sufficed to cause all heads to sink in reverence, to bow the proud and humble necks, so deeply, so reverentially, that high and low, old and young, poor and rich were now all one and the same—the petitioners of the electoral minister, the almighty Stadtholder in the Mark!

He now strode forward, followed by the two pages with their empty baskets. But these baskets were soon filled, for at each step forward a hand was stretched out to the count, handing him a written petition, and the count took it smilingly, and with distinguished indifference cast it into one of the proffered baskets. But before those who had come without written requests, and entreated a gracious personal hearing, the Stadtholder paused, and they began hurriedly, and with embarrassment, because they feared being heard by their neighbors, to state their wishes. It seldom happened, however, that the count allowed them to speak to the end, interrupting them in the midst of their speech with a hasty, "Commit it to writing! commit it to writing!" and striding on with the same lofty bearing, the same proud, imperturbable equanimity. Only when he neared the spot where stood the delegates of the citizens of Berlin and Cologne a cloud overshadowed his brow, and a flash of anger shot from his eyes.

He stopped before the burgers, and looked at them with an expression of cold, scornful repose.

"What do you want of me?" he asked.

"Help in our need, most gracious excellency," began the spokesman, "pity for our misfortunes! We can not pay the new war tax, we——"

"Ah! just see," the count interrupted him mockingly; "now you come to me, to sue for my favor. Your visit, then, to his Electoral Grace, has been in vain. The Elector has not granted the shameless petition of the citizenship; he has not encroached upon the rights of the Stadtholder appointed by himself to rule here in his stead. You have thought to circumvent me, and hardly has the lord of the land come hither before you must gain favors from himself. Well, see what favors you have obtained! Hardly an hour ago you walked with quick, proud steps into the castle of his Electoral Grace, and now you stand with humble, sad countenances in the antechamber of the Stadtholder in the Mark! What will you have here, and what have those to do with the Stadtholder who can converse with the Elector himself?"

"Pardon, your excellency, as faithful and humble children of the country, we turned first to our father and lord——"

"Now stick to that!" interrupted the count warmly, "and desire not to obtain from me what the fatherly heart of your beloved liege lord has denied you. Go, and never again appear in these parts! And you, too, my lords, deputies from the duchy of Cleves," continued the count, striding forward toward the deputies—"you, too, might reasonably have spared yourselves the trouble of appearing here. Who has enjoyed the honor of being received by his Electoral Highness need have no necessity for antechambering at the house of his minister and Stadtholder, for all favors and all honors flow from the almighty and exalted person of the Elector himself, and what he has done is good, and what he has said stands fast and is the law. Therefore, also, whoever has obtained dismissal from his Electoral Grace need no more turn to me, for the sun has shone upon him, and like myself he stands in the shade."

With these ambiguous words the Stadtholder moved forward, leaving the deputies covered with shame and swelling with indignation, while his countenance had speedily brightened. With more friendly gestures he now accepted the written petitions, and even listened patiently and condescendingly to those who had only come with oral supplications; promised them redress for their difficulties, exhorted them with loud voice to place confidence in their Stadtholder, appointed by the Elector, and to be assured that whoever turned to him would not sue and plead in vain, if his cause were just, fair, and practicable.

When the count had finished his circuit and stood again at his cabinet door, the baskets were piled high with written petitions, and the count, pointing to these with outstretched right hand, on whose fingers sparkled many a costly jewel, asseverated with loud voice that he would himself open, read, and examine all these writings, and do whatever was in his power. Then, with a short, gracious nod of dismissal, he retired into his cabinet, followed by the two pages with their baskets.

IV.—Soldiers and Diplomatists.

Awaiting Count von Schwarzenberg in his cabinet were the four officers whom the lackey had conducted there in obedience to his instructions. They grew dumb in the midst of their conversation when the count entered, and stood up, saluting him in stiff and military style. Count Schwarzenberg nodded to them in a friendly manner, and an obliging smile played about his thin and finely cut lips.

"Put the baskets on my writing table and go out," he commanded the pages, and then turned toward the gentlemen, who still stood there with soldierly stiffness.

"Welcome, my lord general, and you, sirs colonels," he said in playful, jocular tone. "Truly, it is a pleasure to see one's self surrounded by such valiant soldiers. If my gracious master the Elector had as many such splendid soldiers as he has

leaders, he would be helped indeed, and not find it necessary to battle with the Swedes for his dukedom of Pomerania, for then would the Swedes soon run off conquered."

"Just imagine, your excellency," cried Colonel Conrad von Burgsdorf, while he stroked his long, gray mustache with his broad fat hand—"just imagine what respect the Swedes would have for such a regiment composed of Klitzings, Rochows, and Krachts."

"You forget yourself, Sir Colonel," said Count Schwarzenberg, in a friendly, insinuating tone; "you forget to say that Conrad von Burgsdorf alone is a whole regiment in himself."

"Perhaps that is the reason why I have in fact nothing behind me," cried Colonel von Burgsdorf, with a loud, coarse laugh. "Yes, yes, now I know why I have so few soldiers behind me; the others all concentrate in me, and it is merely a pity and shame that they can not come forth from me to make front against the cursed Swedes."

"They will come forth now, depend upon it; they will come forth," said the count, with a pleasant smile. "My lords, I have had you summoned to confer with you about important and significant tidings. In the first place, we shall consider what relates to yourselves, and is therefore of greatest interest to you. General von Klitzing, henceforth you shall have no cause to complain of having a title but no employment. For from this very day you shall have employment, since his Electoral Grace designs forthwith to have regiments equipped and brought into the field."

"Hurrah! now for it!" shouted Burgsdorf, waving his right arm.

"I shout hurrah, too, with your excellency's permission," said General von Klitzing joyfully. "It has been three months since your excellency did me the favor to recall me here from the Saxon service in order to assume the command of the Brandenburg troops, and I have been in despair ever since, for it has been just like acting a comedy, where they fight with pasteboard swords and tin soldiers."

"That was the fault of the states and cities, who would not grant the Elector taxes for the equipment of regiments,"

returned the count, with emphasis. "Besides, ever since the peace of Prague the Elector has been pledged to neutrality. And if you can take part neither for nor against, can fight neither for friend nor foe, then it is better to have no soldiers, and no swords that can not be unsheathed. But now all will be different, and therefore the Elector nominates you, General von Klitzing, commandant general of all the Brandenburg fortresses, their garrisons, and all the electoral forces collectively."

"That is indeed an important and honorable appointment," cried the general, "and I shall esteem myself happy if I can now succeed in bringing the electoral forces into action."

"That must be done the first thing, general, yes, indeed, that must be done," cried Burgsdorf, laughing. "Alack! up to this time we have had no soldiers, for the couple of wretched fellows in each of the forts and the Elector's bodyguard could hardly be accounted such, and made but a poor show."

"Upon you, gentlemen, upon you it will henceforth devolve to create an army," said Schwarzenberg solemnly. "Colonel von Kracht, in virtue of my office as Stadtholder in the Mark, I this day pronounce you commandant of the fortresses of Berlin and Cologne; with the same fullness of power, I appoint you, Colonel von Rochow, commandant of Spandow; and lastly you, Colonel von Burgsdorf, I constitute commandant of the Fortress Küstrin."

"I should have been better pleased if you had made me commandant of Berlin," growled Conrad von Burgsdorf. "They lead such a dull, wearisome life at Fortress Küstrin, and I wish that Kracht and I could change places with one another. He knows the people of Küstrin well, and understands how to get along with them, for the late commandant of Küstrin was his father. Let us exchange with one another, von Kracht—here is my hand, give me yours! You are commandant of Küstrin and I of Berlin!"

"Slowly, colonel," replied Baron von Kracht; "we must yield to order and authority, and submit ourselves to whatever the Stadtholder in the Mark has found good to arrange for us."

"Well said, Sir Commandant of Berlin!" cried Schwarzenberg. "I was silent, because I wished to hear your answer. It follows, therefore, Colonel von Burgsdorf, that you go as commandant to Fortress Küstrin."

"I know very well that you send me away to remove me as far as possible from your residence Berlin," growled Burgsdorf. "You can not bear to see that the Elector is attached to me, and calls me his friend. You can not bear that another should execute and perform what you yourself can not execute and perform. I saw plainly yesterday the look of hatred and ill will which you darted at me, across the Elector's table, while the great drinking match that I had proposed was going on. It was right plain to be seen how much vexed you were, that there was anything in which Conrad von Burgsdorf could excel the wise, the learned, and the most worshipful Count Adam von Schwarzenberg."

"Well! you really suppose that I could be envious and jealous?" cried the count, laughing. "No, most worthy colonel, with my whole heart I yield you the palm for being the first and most rapid drinker at the electoral court, and for emptying a quart cup of wine at one draught."

"And it is no trifling art, you must know, Sir Count," said Burgsdorf, with an important air. "Think not that it is a mere pleasure—no, it is a task too, and at times a difficult one."

"We did not observe it as such yesterday, Colonel von Burgsdorf," retorted the count. "You proved yourself yesterday a truly intrepid hero in drinking at the electoral table. For it is in fact an heroic deed to quaff eighteen quarts of wine in one hour, as you did yesterday."

"Well," said Burgsdorf, flattered, "we had a drinking-match, and the Elector had offered a fine prize to the best drinker. I had long desired to obtain possession of the pretty and flourishing little village Danzien, and, behold! this was the very prize the Elector had offered; so I was obliged to do what I could, and have to thank God that I came off victor. I drank all the other gentlemen under the table, and was alone left standing, with my eighteen quarts of wine aboard." *

* King, Description of Berlin, part 1, p. 237.

"Now," said the Stadtholder, smiling, "I think you did not leave me under the table, for I kept erect in spite of you, Colonel Burgsdorf. I hope also to keep my position yet longer, and never to be thrust under the table by you."

He looked full in the colonel's bloated and wine-flushed face with a cold, proud glance, and smiled when he saw how Burgsdorf's brow darkened and his eyes flashed with fierce hatred.

"You will remain standing, Sir Stadtholder, so long as God and the Elector please," said Burgsdorf slowly. "Many an one falls, and under the table, too, although he may not be drunk with wine, but with pride and ambition, avarice and rapacity."

"Enough, Burgsdorf, enough," replied the count haughtily. "I did not summon you here to hold with you a controversy about words, for well do I know that you are as mighty in words as in drinking. I have had you summoned that you might receive your orders, and do and perform whatever the Stadtholder in the Mark commands and enjoins upon you, in the names of the Emperor's Majesty and his Electoral Grace. General von Klitzing, I have nominated you commander in chief of all the fortifications, as you, Colonels von Kracht, von Rochow, and von Burgsdorf, commandants of Berlin, Spandow, and Küstrin. You may perceive from this that a new era has dawned, and that we have great things to expect from the future. Gentlemen, the time for waiting and delay is past. The Elector has concluded a treaty with the Emperor, by which the Emperor declares that the dukedom of Pomerania is the natural heritage of the Elector of Brandenburg, and invests him with it. It is true that at present the Swedes occupy Pomerania, and will not evacuate. But to that very end we must labor, to force the presumptuous Swedes to do this; and thereto the Elector has pledged himself to raise an army of five-and-twenty thousand men. To superintend these levies is the affair of the colonels and staff officers, therefore also your affair."

"The only question is, where is the money to come from to effect such levies," said General Klitzing.

"Yes, that is the question," exclaimed the three colonels impatiently.

"And the answer runs: The Emperor's Majesty has assigned money for that purpose. The Emperor's Majesty has granted the Elector a release from the payment of two hundred Roman-months which the Elector owed him, and with these two hundred Roman-months, which amount to three hundred and sixty-five thousand florins, troops are to be levied. But besides this, the Emperor expressly adds sixty thousand dollars, to be employed in enlisting soldiers; and the money will be paid out to those leaders and colonels who have recruited such and such a number of soldiers. For each soldier they get eight rixdollars."

"I shall recruit!" shouted Burgsdorf. "I shall go as commandant to Küstrin, and enlist a regiment besides!"

"It is a matter of course that we all recruit," said General von Klitzing, "for such is the command and desire of the Elector, and him as our commander in chief we are bound to obey."

"By no means, general!" cried the count hastily. "Your commander in chief is the Emperor of Germany. The soldiers whom you shall enlist will of course be subject to the command of the Elector, but they must take an oath of allegiance to the Emperor and the empire, which runs thus, that they will be obedient to the Emperor, and in his stead to the Elector of Brandenburg, in order that the dukedom of Pomerania be recovered to the Elector, its natural sovereign.* According to the compact between the Emperor and the Elector, the official oath of military governors must also conform to this formula, and the commandants of fortresses be taken into the service of the Emperor and the empire. First and foremost is the obedience and fealty they owe to the Emperor."

"I do not understand that; it does not penetrate through my thick skull!" cried Burgsdorf impatiently. "How will it be if the Emperor's commands go counter to those of the Elector? If the Emperor orders us to do *this*, and the Elector *that?*"

"That will never happen," replied the count gravely.

* Droysen, History of Prussian Politics, part 3, p. 172.

"The Elector is much too loyal and faithful a vassal of the Emperor not to coincide always with the latter's gracious purposes and desires. I have now told you all that it is needful for you to know, have given you your commissions and announced your several ranks, and it only remains to administer to you the prescribed oath. In view of my absolute power as Stadtholder in the Mark, and as head of the electoral council of war, I will now receive your oath of fidelity to the Emperor and the Elector, and you must engage and swear to fulfill constantly and faithfully your duties to Emperor, empire, and Elector."

And just as the count dictated, without delay or contradiction, the four lords repeated the formula of the oath, and swore obedience, good faith, and service, first to the Emperor and the empire, and then to the Elector of Brandenburg. Thereupon the count dismissed them, exhorting them to repair instantly to their fortresses, and there to begin enlisting soldiers for the army of the Elector.

The count's countenance cleared up and assumed a triumphant expression when the four officers had left his cabinet, and he was now once more alone.

"I shall now be rid of that quarrelsome and dangerous man, Burgsdorf," he said complacently, as he sank apparently exhausted into an easy chair. "I have rendered him harmless and shoved him aside without his being really conscious of it. He does not suspect that we advanced and promoted the others only to remove him, Burgsdorf, to a distance, without exciting remark or scandal, and in order to be freed from his scurrilous tongue and insolent presence. I am truly glad and content that we have succeeded in this, and at the same time have taken these unreflecting and short-sighted gentlemen into service and allegiance to the Emperor and the empire." With a hurried "Who is there?" the count interrupted himself, starting from his seat. "Who dares to enter here unannounced?"

"I dare," said an earnest voice, and a tall, slender gentleman, wholly enveloped in a heavy traveling coat, his head covered with a great fur cap, strode through the apartment toward the count.

"Count Lesle, lord high chamberlain to the Emperor!" exclaimed the Stadtholder in surprise. "Is it you? Are you direct from Regensburg?"

"Yes, Count Schwarzenberg, I have come here direct from Regensburg, to depart again without delay. My traveling carriage stands without before your door, and I shall presently enter it, and journey hence again. You will on that account excuse my want of ceremony, but as the Emperor Ferdinand permits me to enter his apartments at any time, I thought that the Stadtholder of the Mark would not be less affable. Moreover, I could not send in my name, for no one besides yourself is to know of my being here, and I wish to travel *incognito*. Will you, then, pardon me, Count Schwarzenberg, and am I excused?"

"I am the one to sue for forgiveness, on account of my impatience, and I do so most cordially. And now I entreat you, count, first of all, make yourself comfortable. Permit me to assist you in laying aside your cumbrous traveling habit, and accept some ease and refreshment."

With officious zeal he busied himself in aiding his visitor to emerge from his wrappings, and soon Count Lesle stood before the Stadtholder of the Mark in the beautiful, unique Spanish garb, such as was worn at the imperial court.

"How glorious you look in those magnificent velvet robes!" cried Count Schwarzenberg, with a sigh, "and how much your Spanish costume makes me long for the sumptuous life of the imperial court! Ah! my dear count, here among us you find hardly a trace of this costly, splendid living, and an imperial valet or house servant has more pleasure and enjoyment than an Electoral Stadtholder in the Mark."

"Yet it is a fine and sonorous title," said Count Lesle, smiling, while he stretched himself out comfortably in the great armchair which Count Schwarzenberg had rolled forward for him, "and it is also a great and influential office. The Emperor's Majesty knows very well what a mighty and potent man the Stadtholder in the Mark is, and that Count Schwarzenberg is really Elector of Brandenburg."

"His Imperial Majesty knows, too, that I have never yet ceased to be the faithful and devoted servant of the Emperor,"

cried Schwarzenberg, at the same time drawing a simple chair to the side of the count's fauteuil, and seating himself upon it. "His Imperial Majesty knows, I hope, that first and above all other things I place my duty to the Emperor, and that I have no higher aim than to subserve the interests of his Imperial Majesty."

"Yes, the Emperor, our most gracious Sovereign, knows that," said Count Lesle feelingly. "He does not for a moment doubt the fidelity and attachment of the Stadtholder in the Mark, who has always been mindful that the Elector is only the Emperor's vassal, and the Emperor the real lord of the whole German Empire."

"And to maintain this relation intact, yes, that is what I have made the greatest task of my life," cried Schwarzenberg, with animation. "It is a task, in truth, not easy to be accomplished, for the Emperor's supreme Government has many enemies here at the electoral court, and very many there are here who maintain that Brandenburg should free herself entirely from imperial vassalage, and that the Elector should be sole lord within his own domains. But now, dearest lord high chamberlain and count, tell me wherefore you have come here so unexpectedly, and what news do you bring from Regensburg?"

"Very serious and very subtile news I bring with me, count," replied Count Lesle, "and of such a tender, delicate nature that we could not willingly entrust it to paper, even in cipher, but could only transmit it from my lips to your ear, and thence to the locked-up recesses of your breast. Therefore I have come to you, and need hardly say that not a breath of our conversation is to escape, and that nobody must know of my having been here. The question is about the Electoral Prince of Brandenburg—that young man who has already tarried more than three years in the Netherlands, and is imbibing there the hated poison of insubordination and passion for freedom. It is high time that the Electoral Prince were recalled."

"Recalled!" cried Count Schwarzenberg, starting up amazed. "But, Count Lesle, you do not know the Electoral Prince. You do not know the danger that would accrue

now if this restless, ambitious, and fiery young man were to return home. My enemies and the secret opponents of the Emperor here desire nothing more ardently than just this very thing, and the Rochows and Schönungs and all the reformers have already brought matters to such a pass that the Elector himself presses most urgently for his son's return home, and has even peremptorily required it of him. It is a plot of all the Swedish wellwishers, all the anti-imperialists of this court, believe me. They wish to place the Electoral Prince at their head, and hope by this means to bring it about that the weak and vacillating Elector shall secede from the Emperor and ally himself with the Swedes. They teased and goaded the Elector, until he even sent his Chamberlain von Schlieben to The Hague in order to fetch the Prince, and the latter has but to-day returned from his vain expedition."

"From his vain expedition, do you say? The Electoral Prince remains at The Hague, then, despite the strict commands, the pressing messages of his father? You see by that what fruit his stay at The Hague has already produced, and that the poison which he has imbibed there is even now at work. The Electoral Prince seems to be thoughtful and studious. And so much the more dangerous is it to leave him any longer at The Hague, where all are ill disposed toward the Spaniards, where is to be found the real hearthstone of the great European opposition to the house of Hapsburg, where the Prince of Orange is his instructor in the art of war, and can educate him to be a skillful and dangerous warrior and an enemy of the Emperor."

"All that is very true!" said Schwarzenberg gloomily. "But for all that he is less to be dreaded there than here, where he would cross all our plans and bring to nothing all our schemes. The Electoral Prince is a dangerous opponent, believe me. There is something bewitching in his character, and he would be in a position either to carry the Elector along with him in his career or to induce George William to follow his father's example, and resign the government in favor of his son, the Electoral Prince Frederick William. And do you know, Count Lesle, what would be the first act of Frederick William's reign? To depose me, to take all power out of my

hands, and to institute a new course of policy for the house of Brandenburg!"

"Only get him here first, count, and then it is your affair to guard against this extreme. Take example from what happened on one occasion in Spain, where also rioters and innovators thronged around the heir to the throne, by his abettance to overturn existing institutions and hurl the King from his throne. My God! You know the story of King Philip and his son Carlos. Hardly fifty years have elapsed since then. Profit by this example, and learn from this story that if the son is dangerous, you have only to render him suspected by his father, and he becomes innocuous. If the son is the enemy of his father, then the father must also be made the enemy of his son, that in this way an equilibrium be preserved. You are much too great a statesman and too acute a diplomatist not to know how to act in this matter. But the urgency of the case is pressing. You must have him under your own eyes, under your own guardianship."

"It is true," said Schwarzenberg thoughtfully, "he imbibes deadly poison there, and is quite too enthusiastic in his admiration of the Protestant leader, the Prince of Orange. His letters to his parents overflow with enthusiasm for the Orange general, whom he calls his master and teacher in the art of war, and lavishes upon him extravagant praise."

"And they are giving themselves trouble enough to link the young Prince yet more closely to the house of Orange, and the enemies of Spain and Hapsburg," said Count Lesle emphatically. "The Emperor has obtained exact accounts as to the practices going on at The Hague, whereby the Electoral Prince may be brought into the land of Cleves and united by marriage with the Palatinate house, whereby he may be brought equally under the influence of the sovereign States and the Prince of Orange, and estranged from the Holy Roman Empire.*

"He is to marry a princess of the Palatinate!" exclaimed the Stadtholder. "Ah! now I understand why the Electress, despite her tender love for her only son, constantly endeavors

* Count Lesle's own words. *Vide* von Orlich, History of Prussia, part 1, p. 40.

to keep him away, and to prolong his stay at The Hague. I always thought until now that it was on my account. I thought that the Electress believed me to have evil and malign intentions with regard to the Electoral Prince, and for that reason alone was opposed to her son's return. But now I see into it; she is for this Palatinate marriage, she wishes by that means to bind her son more closely to her own house and its interests, to alienate him further from the Emperor and the Holy Roman Empire. It is the daughter of the banished Bohemian King, the Princess Ludovicka Hollandine, who is to be the tie to unite him to Orange and the Palatinate. All this becomes suddenly clear to me, and I can not imagine how I could have been so blind and so innocent as not to have divined and penetrated into this earlier. The Electoral Prince does, indeed, in each of his letters make mention of the little household over which the banished Bohemian Queen, the Electress of the Palatinate, presides at Doornward, not far from The Hague."

"She has now removed her residence farther, to The Hague itself," said Count Lesle dryly; "without doubt, because winter approaches, and it will be more comfortable for the Electoral Prince not to find it necessary to travel that long way to Doornward to see his dearly beloved one. She must be quite a pretty girl, the Princess Ludovicka Hollandine, and, moreover, of very tender complexion, and not at all disposed to play the prude with the young, handsome Electoral Prince, who seems particularly to please her."

"And the Electress is particularly partial to her sister-in-law, the Electress of the Palatinate," said Schwarzenberg thoughtfully. "Tears always come into her eyes whenever she speaks of her, and calls to mind her brother's unhappy fate.* It would, indeed, be for the advantage of her house

* The Elector Frederick V of the Palatinate, brother to the Electress of Brandenburg, was (after the Archduke Maximilian had been declared to have forfeited the Bohemian throne) elected by the Bohemians to be their King. He accepted the nomination, but a few days after his coronation was defeated in the battle of the White Mountain in Austria (1620); wandered about homeless for a long time, and died in 1632 in Mainz. His wife was a daughter of the King of England, and his mother

if the daughter of her banished brother should again exalt the honor of her family, and find in Brandenburg amends for the lost Palatinate. For when women take it into their heads to meddle with politics, then are their hearts always interested; and even in politics, match making is their especial delight. Yes, yes, Count Lesle, I see into it now; you are right. The Electoral Prince is to wed the Palatinate Princess, and the Electress favors this match."

"But the Emperor would be displeased at it in the highest degree," cried Count Lesle. "It is therefore impossible that this alliance take place. You must do everything to prevent the Elector from granting his consent, and however many are for it, and blow upon one horn, yet the Elector must strike no note in harmony with this Palatinate marriage." *

"No, the Elector will not and shall not," replied the count decidedly. "It is for me to prevent him, and—— You are indeed right. There is nothing left to be done but to summon the Electoral Prince from The Hague."

"It would be pleasant to the Emperor if the Electoral Prince came to his court," remarked Count Lesle; "it would be a token of confidence, and make an impression throughout the Holy Roman Empire upon friend and foe."

"Alas! the most important requisite of all is wanting—we want money," sighed Count Schwarzenberg, shrugging his shoulders.

"Well, that shall furnish no ground for objection, Sir Stadtholder. The Emperor commissioned me expressly to announce to you that his Imperial Majesty would gladly hold himself ready to furnish some assistance, yes, if needful, all the money required for the expenses of this journey." † And the Emperor would not be niggardly with his supplies of money for traveling, but give such sums that the Electoral Prince need not come merely to his Majesty at Vienna, but

a Princess of Orange, wherefore his wife and children found a refuge and protection at The Hague.

* Count Lesle's own words. *Vide* Droysen, History of Prussian Politics, vol. iii, p. 173.

† Historical. *Vide* von Orlich, part 1, p. 42.

also make a little excursion to Innsprück. For at Innsprück the Archduke Leopold now holds his court, and the Electoral Prince could not fail to enjoy himself there, for the court at Innsprück is brilliantly gay, and the archduke's youthful daughter, Clara Isabella, is peculiarly fond of pleasure, and is a beautiful and attractive young lady."

With a sudden movement of the head Count Schwarzenberg turned toward Lesle. "You do not mean it?" he asked hesitatingly.

Count Lesle nodded. "It is much to be desired," he said, smiling.

"But I fear it is impossible!" cried Schwarzenberg. "Every one here will be opposed to it; no one in favor of it. It is simply not to be thought of, and impossible that the Electoral Prince should marry a Catholic."

"It only seems probable, and to effect it, it is only necessary to go to work in the right way," said Count Lesle quietly. "You see by yourself how the inconceivable can still become matter of reality. Would it not have been supposed impossible that at this court, where there are none but heretics, where Reformers and Lutherans contend for precedence, that a Catholic and an imperialist could have become prime minister and confidential adviser to the Elector? And yet so it is, and for twenty years past the Catholic Count Schwarzenberg has been the favorite and I may say the controller of the Elector of Brandenburg. And why should not the Catholic minister and Stadtholder be able to negotiate a Catholic alliance? You underrate your power, count, and are by far too modest."

"Say rather I know the ground on which I tread, Count Lesle. Believe me, it is slippery and marshy soil, and a single incautious step may cause me to sink."

"Then guard against an incautious step, but advance boldly forward in the interests of his Imperial Majesty, and be assured that Ferdinand will prove himself to be a grateful and a gracious lord. And now, count, you know all that I came to communicate to you, and it is time for me to set out again."

"Will you set forth again so soon, Count Lesle, before you

have done me the honor of taking a little breakfast and drinking a glass of wine with me?"

"Thank you, count, thank you most cordially. You know well, however, that the master's business is before all things else. My imperial master awaits me at Regensburg, and I shall then have the honor of being permitted to accompany him to Vienna. His Imperial Majesty is a strict and punctilious lord, and has calculated to the very day and hour when I may again reach the imperial palace. For our interview here he allowed me one hour; and, lo! the cock of your great wall clock had just stepped out and crowed eleven as I entered your room, and is already here, crowing twelve as loud as he can. It is therefore time for me to depart. I have briefly made you acquainted with the Emperor's intentions and desires, and your wise and fertile brain will know how to enlarge and construe. Farewell, Sir Stadtholder in the Mark, farewell, and may every blessing attend you!"

Count Lesle had risen and drawn his fur cap once more far over his brow. Schwarzenberg assisted him to don his ample and heavy wrappings, and then escorted him to the door.

"Permit me at least to conduct you to your carriage, Count Lesle," he said.

"Impossible, count; that would excite remark among your people, and give rise to conjectures on all sides. I gave myself out on entering as one of your officials from Sonnenburg, and your dignity does not suffer you to act toward your officials as toward an equal. Farewell, then!"

Count Lesle stepped out briskly, and hurriedly closed the palace door. Schwarzenberg stood listening to the retreating footsteps of the imperial legate until they died away in the long corridor. Then he slowly turned away and sank with a sigh into the armchair which Count Lesle had recently occupied.

"Strange tidings those," he muttered to himself. "I must now then adopt a wholly different line of action—must derange and newly model all my plans. What I would altogether avoid I must now do—must recall the Electoral Prince; must yield to him the precedence at court, both in rank and

position; must——" All at once he started up and shrank, as if a sudden flash of lightning had interrupted his train of thought. "If it must be," he said quite softly to himself, "if nothing else is left for me, and I see myself in danger, then I will do it. I shall resort to this last expedient."

But even while he pronounced the words he grew pale and cast around him a timid, anxious glance, as if he dreaded being overheard by some traitorous ear. Then he leaned his head upon the back of the armchair, and sat, long, silent, and motionless, wholly absorbed in deep and earnest thought.

"Yes, it shall be so," he said at last. "He must leave The Hague; but it does not signify necessarily that he will arrive here so soon. The way is long, the roads are unsafe, and he must travel cautiously and circumspectly, for many cutthroats wander about, and who knows whether the Swedes may not make the attempt to capture and carry off the young Prince, or murder him, that he may not some day contest with them the possession of Pomerania. All this must, indeed, be risked; then—— Master Gabriel Nietzel must nevertheless still go to The Hague; only I shall give him other instructions, and he will have a wholly different errand to fulfill. Yes, yes, it shall be so; I shall have him summoned directly."

He had already stretched out his hand for the whistle, when the outer door opened, and the valet entered.

"Pardon, your excellency. A lackey has just come from the palace. The Elector begs and entreats of your grace that you will have the kindness to repair forthwith to the Elector's residence."

"Present my respects to the Elector, and say that I shall do myself the honor of waiting upon him. Go, tell the lackey that, and have my carriage of state ordered out forthwith."

"Most gracious sir, I beg your pardon, but your excellency can not possibly go in the great carriage of state."

"Well, and why not?"

"Your excellency knows that it has been raining four days without intermission, and the ground is so soaked through that a man can not cross the streets or square without sinking up to his knees, how much less then a heavy vehicle. The carriage of the strange gentleman who has just been with your

excellency remained stuck fast a few steps from here, and the coachman and footman, with a couple of our stableboys, are still busied in trying to pull it out of the mud."

"Heaven defend us!" cried the count, traversing the apartment with rapid strides; "then I must go myself directly and help the gentleman——"

But he suddenly bethought himself, and slowly stepped back from the door. "With the help of my stableboys, he must already be again on the road—my official from Sonnenburg," he said. "You think, then, that I can not take the great coach of state?"

"Not possibly, gracious sir. It is a morass, such as has not been for ages, and the townspeople have already brought out their mud carriages again."

"What is that? What are mud carriages?"

"Your excellency, I mean the stilts on which they parade around when the mud is very bad."

The count laughed. "The end of it is that nothing is left for me to do but to betake myself to stilts likewise in order to reach the electoral palace."

"It would be the easiest way, indeed," replied the lackey; "only it is not quite consistent with respect. But the great coach can not go."

"Then let them take my light hunting chaise, and attach four of my best coursers. In ten minutes I must be in the carriage."

V.—The Elector and his Favorite.

In exactly ten minutes the hunting chaise stood in the inner court of the count's palace, and, as this was paved with huge granite flagstones, the count succeeded in reaching his carriage without spattering his white silk stockings, extending as far as the knee, or soiling his delicate velvet slippers, with their brilliant buckles and high red heels. Then the lackeys opened the great trellised gate of gilded iron, and with loud thundering the carriage rolled from the court out into

the street. The coachman lashed the air with his whip, and the four coursers flew, hardly touching the ground with their pretty feet. The mud, to be true, splashed in mighty waves from the wheels and hoofs, giving the benefit of its floods to many an honest burger's wife who could not on her stilts immediately escape; often, indeed, was heard the anguished squeak or piteous howl of some sucking pig or dog over which the hunting equipage had rolled; but it paused not for these, and in a few moments halted in safety before the mean little portal of that small, dark mansion, honored with the title of the Elector's residential palace, which was situated on the other side of the cathedral square, near the Spree and the pleasure garden.

Before the portal stood a wretched carriage, covered with mud and drawn by four raw-boned horses, whose trappings and harness were wholly wanting in polish and neatness.

"The Elector means to ride out, it seems," said the count to himself, with a contemptuous glance at the poor electoral equipage.

"Drive a little aside!" screamed the count's well-dressed coachman from his box. "Let his excellency the Stadtholder drive up to the door, for it is just impossible for the count to alight here in this mud."

But the coachman only shook his head proudly, in token of refusal, and darted a look full of inexpressible contempt upon the Stadtholder's presumptuous driver.

"Drive out of the way!" shouted the count's coachman.

"Here I stand, and here I mean to stay until the Elector comes!"

"Let him remain, William, and speak not another word," commanded Count Schwarzenberg. "Drive my carriage up so close to the electoral carriage that I can conveniently step in."

The coachman obeyed, and the electoral charioteer, who had begun the contention with the supercilious driver of the Stadtholder with inward satisfaction, and hoped for a long protraction of the same, now felt himself foiled, and saw with inexpressible astonishment the coachman turn around, with rapid sweep make the circuit of the square, and draw up close

beside the electoral equipage. Before he yet comprehended the object of this manœuvre, the count had stretched forth his arm, opened with his own hand the door of the electoral coach, stepped into it, opened the door on the other side, and stepped out on the broad leather-covered plank which extended like a sort of drawbridge from the threshold of the palace garden to the electoral carriage.

"Bravo, Schwarzenberg, bravo!" called out a laughing voice, and as the count, standing midway on the plank, looked up, he saw the Elector above at the open window, nodding to him with friendly gesture, and greeting him with a cheerful smile.

"That was good for the brazen scoundrel, Fritz Long," called down the Elector; "how could the rascal dare not to move out of the way for the Stadtholder?"

"He did right, your Electoral Grace!" called up Schwarzenberg, as he hastily doffed his gold-edged hat with its waving plumes, and bowed so low that the tips of the white feathers surmounting the black ones touched the damp ground.

"Put on your hat, and come up," said the Elector. "It is cold down there."

"Only permit me first, most gracious sir, to do a little act of justice," cried Schwarzenberg, turning with a pleasant smile to the electoral coachman, who stared at him with sullen mien.

"Fritz Long," he said, with amiable condescension—"Fritz Long, you have acted as became a brave and trusty electoral coachman. You are perfectly right; you must never drive out of the way, even should the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire himself come to visit the Elector. In recognition of your honesty and truth, accept this present from me."

And the count drew from the side pocket of his richly embroidered vest two gold pieces, and laid them in the immense hand, gloved in a dirty, yellow gauntlet, which the Elector's joyfully surprised state coachman reached out to him. The count again nodded affably to him, and passed through the palace portal. "I hope," he said to himself, while he slowly ascended the broad wooden stairs—"I hope that in the next riot my fellows will properly punish the shameless

rascal, and take out the two gold coins I have given him in little pieces on his broad back."

The Elector advanced as far as the antechamber to meet his beloved minister, and opened the door himself.

"Listen, Schwarzenberg," he said, with a smile; "you are such a capital man. You know how to help in all emergencies, and even when they drive you into the deepest mud you know how to come forth dry-shod and clean."

"Well, I may indeed have learned something of diplomacy and strategy at the electoral court," answered the minister, at the same time offering the support of his shoulder to assist the Elector in returning to his cabinet. "Your grace has summoned me, and I feared lest intelligence of a disquieting nature had reached your highness, the——"

"Very disquieting intelligence, indeed," sighed the Elector, as he sank down groaning into his leather armchair. "But I suppose you know it already. Schlieben is back, and our son comes not with him; he only writes us a lamentable letter, in which he explains that he can not come home at this season of the year, and in the present conjunction of the times."

"But that is rebellion!" exclaimed Schwarzenberg warmly; "that is putting himself in downright opposition to his Sovereign and his father!"

"You look upon it in that light too, then, Schwarzenberg?" asked George William. "You agree with me that the Electoral Prince has acted like a disobedient son and disrespectful subject?"

"Oh, my God!" sighed Schwarzenberg; "would that I could not agree with your highness! Would that an excuse might be found for this conduct of the Electoral Prince! It is painful to see how boldly the young gentleman dares to resist the supremacy of his father."

"It is rebellion, is it not?" asked George, his excitement waxing continually. "We send our own Chamberlain Schlieben to The Hague; we write our son a letter with our own hand, enjoining him to return home; we, moreover, inform him verbally through Schlieben of the urgent necessity of his return, and still our son insists that he will remain at The

Hague, and has the spirit to send Schlieben home without accompanying him."

"That is indeed to put himself in open opposition and rebellion against his most gracious lord and father. And now your Electoral Highness must persist in requiring the Electoral Prince to set out and come back."

"He must and shall come back, must he not? The Electress, indeed, intercedes for him, and would gladly persuade us that we should grant our son one year's longer sojourn at The Hague, to perfect himself in all sorts of knowledge."

"Your highness," said Schwarzenberg softly, edging himself closer to the Elector's ear—"your highness, the Electress knows very well that the Electoral Prince has something in view at The Hague totally different from the acquisition of knowledge."

"Well, and what may that be?"

"A marriage, your highness. A marriage with the daughter of the widowed Electress of the Palatinate—with the fair Ludovicka Hollandine."

"That would indeed be a fine, plausible marriage!" cried the Elector, starting up. "A Princess of nothing, the daughter of an outlawed Prince, put under the ban by the Emperor!"

"But this Prince was the Electress's brother. It would be very pleasant to her grace's tender heart to exalt her prostrate house once more and bring it into consideration again, and she would therefore gladly see her brother's daughter some day a reigning Princess. Besides, the future Electress would then owe her mother-in-law a lifelong debt of gratitude, and the Dowager Electress might exert great influence and share in the government of her son."

"Yes, indeed, they all count upon my death," groaned the Elector; "they all long for the time when I shall be gathered to my fathers. They grudge me life, although, forsooth, it is no light, enjoyable thing to me, but has brought me trouble, deprivation, and want enough. But still, they grudge it to me, and if they could shorten it, would all do so."

"But I, my beloved master and Elector—I stand by you. I have placed it before myself as my sacred aim in life to

guard you as a faithful dog guards his master, and to turn aside from you all that threatens you with danger and vexation. The Emperor, too, as your supreme protector, keeps his benignant eye fixed upon you, his much-loved vassal, and his wrath would crush all that should endeavor to injure you. There are, indeed, many here who think that the Elector of Brandenburg ought to make himself free and independent of that very Emperor, beneficent though he be, and, because your highness stands in their way, they attach themselves to the son, and, placing him at their head, wish to constitute him an opponent of the Emperor and empire. The Electress has probably not yet forgiven and forgotten that the Emperor put her brother under the ban of the empire, and banished him from country and friends. And the Prince of Orange, and the Sovereign States, the Swedes and all the enemies of his Imperial Highness and your Electoral Grace, would all unite their efforts to render the Electoral Prince a pliant tool in their hands. Therefore they wish to detain him yet longer at The Hague, and so to bind him there that he shall be wholly theirs, linked by an indissoluble chain. On that account they wish to bring about this marriage with the Princess Ludovicka Hollandine. I must confide to your highness the information that report has already bruited it abroad, and that it is spoken of at the imperial court. I have to-day received dispatches from Vienna which apprise me that the Emperor is very much opposed to this matrimonial project, and will never give his consent to it."

"And I, too, shall never give my consent!" screamed the Elector. "I will not again be brought to feud and strife with Emperor and empire. I will not range myself on the side of the Emperor's foes, and neither shall my son. I have always said that the Electoral Prince was staying far too long in foreign parts, and that he would return an alien. But you would never agree to it, Adam Schwarzenberg; you always thought that the Electoral Prince was much better off in his place than here, where the malcontents and disturbers of the peace would throng about him, and that he could only learn what was good and profitable there, while here he would learn much that was evil. And now it proves that the air there is

much worse for him still, and that the tempters have more power over him there than here."

"I was blind and short-sighted when I fancied myself wise," replied Schwarzenberg, in a tone of contrition; "I was presumptuous enough to suppose I knew better than my Elector and lord, and now acknowledge in deep abasement how very wrong I was, and how far superior to myself my noble and beloved Electoral Lord is in penetration and foresight. I crave your pardon, most gracious sir, crave it in penitence and humiliation."

The proud Count von Schwarzenberg bowed his knee before the Elector, and with a glance of earnest entreaty pressed his lips to his Sovereign's hand. George William, flattered and enraptured by this humility on the part of his almighty favorite, bent forward and imprinted a kiss upon his lofty forehead.

"Rise, my Adam, rise," he said tenderly. "It does not become the grand master of the German orders, the rich and distinguished count of the empire, to kneel before the little Elector, who is not master of an army, but so poor that he knows not how he shall live and pay his servants; who has nothing of his possessions but the name, and nothing of his position but the burden! Stand up, Adam Schwarzenberg, for I love to see you erect and stately at my side, and to be able to look up to you as to a staff on which I may lean, and which is strong enough to bear me."

Count Schwarzenberg arose from his knees, and, resting his elbows upon the high back of the armchair, inclined his head toward the Elector, who looked up at him with glances of fond affection.

"My lord's coffers, then, are actually empty?" he asked.

"So empty, Adam Schwarzenberg, that my servants can not obtain their wages, and if a beggar were to accost me on my way to church, I could give him nothing, because not a florin is to be found in my own purse—so empty, that our whole project of the Electoral Prince's return threatens to be wrecked thereby, for our son has incurred debts which we are not able to liquidate. Schlieben informs us that the debts of the Electoral Prince amount probably to seven thou-

sand dollars, and, besides that, he needs at least two thousand dollars more to defray the expenses of his journey home, together with his retinue, his carriage, and his horses."

"That is indeed a bad business," said the count thoughtfully, "for it is almost impossible to raise money in these hard times. Nevertheless a remedy shall and must be found, provided that my most gracious Sovereign will condescend to accept aid from his most humble servant and retainer."

"What say you, Adam? You will help me again?" asked the Elector. "Twice you have rescued me already from want, and supported my poverty with your wealth. I am your debtor, your insolvent debtor, who pays no interest, to say nothing of the capital."

"But like a magnanimous, high-spirited gentleman, always give the greater for the less," cried Schwarzenberg, smiling. "It is true I had the good fortune to be able to lend your highness a hundred thousand dollars on two occasions, but your highness gave me in pledge two fair domains in Cleves, which surely would be worth more than the sum lent if they should be sold."

"But nobody would buy them now because war and pestilence rage there, and no one knows who is master there. I give them to you, however, these domains of Huissen and Neustadt: from this very hour they are yours, and I shall forthwith make out for you a deed of donation."

"Oh, my most revered sir, how kind and generous you are!" said Schwarzenberg, "and how you shame me with your magnanimity and goodness! With grateful and submissive heart I accept your gift, and shall this very day tear to pieces both the bonds, and lay them at your Electoral Highness's feet."

"By no means, Adam," said the Elector, almost indignantly, "for then I should not have presented you with Huissen and Neustadt, but you would have paid for them!"

"Then, at least, let me add now another sum, most honored sir, and condescend to accept from me fifty thousand dollars without writing an acknowledgement of debt."

"Will you lend me fifty thousand dollars?" asked the Elector, joyfully surprised.

"I received important remittances of money from my mastership Sonnenburg, and have also saved something from my estates," said the count. "It is true for the time being I have nothing left for myself, but it is better that the servant should suffer privation than his lord. I shall have the honor of transmitting to your highness this very day the fifty thousand dollars in specie and reliable bills of exchange."

"And I shall immediately write you a receipt for them with my own hand," cried the Elector, hastening with youthful speed to his writing table, and grasping paper and pen. With alacrity he dashed off a few words on the paper, moistened a great wafer, laid paper over it, and, pasting it beneath the writing, pressed his great signet upon it.

"There is the deed," he said; "take it, Schwarzenberg, and send me the money."

But the count refused the proffered paper, smilingly waving it off with his hand, while reverentially taking one step backward.

"First the money and then the deed," he said; "all must be in order, gracious sir, and you shall not acknowledge yourself a debtor ere you have received your money."

"Oh! how well I feel all at once!" cried the Elector, "and what a free, glad consciousness I have again in no longer feeling myself a poor debtor, but once more knowing that I have money in my pockets. Now we will give orders for our servants to be paid off; then we will pay the Electoral Prince's debts, and send him money for his traveling expenses, that he may come home and have no pretext for refusal and delay."

"Your highness ought to send another chamberlain to persuade the Electoral Prince in a friendly manner to return," said the count. "There is, for example, Herr von Marwitz, a peculiarly polished and clever gentleman, and in good standing with the Electress and all favorers of the Swedes, but withal a faithful servant of his honored lord."

"Yes, Marwitz shall set off for The Hague, and to-day, too," replied the Elector, with animation. "Marwitz shall bring back my son to me, and I shall exhort and command him under penalty of my wrath to take no excuses whatever, and to enter into no further explanations. He shall pay his

debts, take my son money for his journey, and say to the Electoral Prince that my accumulated wrath as father and Elector will fall upon and crush him if he does not now obey me. I will have an obedient and submissive son, with whom my will is law, else it were better that I had no son! This very day Marwitz shall set out."

"I beg the favor of your Electoral Highness to defer the departure of the Chamberlain von Marwitz until to-morrow," pleaded the count. "Your grace will without doubt desire to write a few words to your son; the Electress, too, will doubtless avail herself of the opportunity to communicate with her son and dear relatives; and I also have a few dispatches to prepare for our envoys there. Most humbly, therefore, I beseech you that Marwitz may not commence his journey to The Hague until to-morrow or the day after."

"To-morrow then be it, Adam, to-morrow he must start."

"Then your highness and the Electress must prepare your letters to-day, and—candidly speaking, I had a great request to make of your Electoral Grace. I have arranged a little hunting party for to-day, and would esteem it an especial favor if your highness would do me the honor to take part in it."

"I shall do so gladly, most gladly!" cried George William, delighted. "I could desire no more pleasant diversion for the present day than a little hunting party, and you know that well, Adam, and understand splendidly how to guess at my wishes. Yes, we shall hunt—but I have no dogs. Mine were all left behind in Prussian, and the head huntsman informs me that the pack of dogs in this place is in very bad condition. I want a hunter and a strong fellow, such a capital boarhound as I have long wished for but have never been able to find."

"I hope that I have found such an one for your highness," said the count, smiling. "I have had inquiries instituted everywhere, and learned that there was a capital animal at Stargard, in Pomerania. I immediately dispatched a special messenger to Herr von Schwiebus, to whom the animal belongs, and in your highness's name asked the purchase

price of the boarhound, and requested that they would send the creature along for your inspection."

"And he is here, the boarhound?" asked the Elector, with sparkling eyes. "Adam, you do indeed understand how to rejoice my heart and guess my wishes. Where is the boarhound? Let me see him."

"Most gracious sir, Herr von Schwiebus seems perfectly wrapped up in this animal, and at first would not hear at all of parting with him; indeed, he was quite angry with Count Henkel for having told me of his precious possession. Only when he heard that it was your Electoral Grace who wished to make the purchase, he softened down a little, and sent a picture which he has had taken of his favorite, in order that your highness might form an idea of the animal and decide whether it would really please you."

"Have you the picture with you, Adam?" asked the Elector eagerly.

The count hurried to the door and took from the little table standing there a roll of paper, which he had laid there on his entrance. He unfolded it, spread it out on a table, and on each corner of the paper placed a weight.

"I entreat your highness just to observe the portrait of the beautiful animal," he begged.

The Elector hastily approached, and an expression of joyful surprise escaped from his lips at the sight of this picture, which, executed with tolerable artistic skill in water colors, represented a large and finely shaped hound, with massive head, clipped ears, and long tail.

"Adam, that is a wonderful animal!" cried the Elector, after a pause of mute rapture. "That boarhound I must have, let it cost what it will. Tell me the price, Adam, the price for this divine creature."

"Most gracious Elector, Herr von Schwiebus seems to be a queer fellow. He said the dog would not seem dear to him in exchange for all the money in the world. If, however, your highness insisted upon buying him, he would give him up on condition that in payment for the dog he might cut down in the electoral forests three thousand trees of his own selection." *

* Historical. *Vide* von Orlich.

"He shall have his price, yes, he shall have it!" cried the Elector, his eyes fixed immovably upon the portrait. "Send forthwith a courier from me to Herr von Schwiebus, and have him notified that I buy the boarhound for three thousand trees, which he may select and fell from my Letzling forest. He shall, conformably with his terms, immediately send me the boarhound. Make haste, Adam, and attend to this matter for me; I long so to have the beautiful creature here. And as regards the Electoral Prince, we will put off Marwitz's departure until the day after to-morrow, for we shall not have time for letter writing to-day on account of the hunting party, and that will occasion the delay of one more day."

VI.—Revelations.

"Not until the day after to-morrow will Marwitz set out on his journey," said Count Schwarzenberg contentedly to himself, when he had left the Elector, and was once more alone in his own cabinet. "Not until the day after to-morrow! So Gabriel Nietzel will have three days the start of him, and, moreover, he can travel more rapidly. The only thing to be considered now is, what shall be the nature of his errand there? We shall at once deliberate as to what will be best!"

Long did he pace the floor of his cabinet with bowed head and arms crossed upon his chest; then all of a sudden he whistled for his valet, and ordered him to look for Master Gabriel Nietzel, and to bring him in at once.

"Your grace," replied the valet, "Master Nietzel has just come into the antechamber, and requests an audience of you."

"Admit him. But first I have a few tasks to give you. Listen!" he beckoned the valet to come nearer, and softly and hurriedly communicated his instructions. "And now," he concluded, "now let the master enter, and then make haste to do what I have told you."

"Well," cried the count, when a few minutes later Gabriel

Nietzel entered the cabinet—" well, now tell me, master, what brings you here so early. My appointment with you was not until this evening."

" Forgive me, your excellency, but in the joy of my heart I thought you might perhaps bestow a moment upon me. I only wished to let your excellency know that it has turned out exactly as I hoped. I communicated to the Electress my purpose of making an artist's tour into Holland. Her highness seemed highly delighted at the idea, and gave me an open note to the Electoral Prince, introducing me to her son as a skillful portrait painter."

" Just show me this note."

The painter handed him a small, neatly folded paper, which the count tore open and perused with a rapid glance.

" Nothing more, in fact, than a very warm recommendation," he said. " And this is all? "

" No, your excellency, the best part is yet to come. The Electress has appointed me her court painter. I receive the same salary as the recently deceased court painter, Mathias Ezizeken, namely, a yearly income of fifty dollars, board and rent free, with two suits of new clothes annually." *

" Now, indeed, you may well be content," laughed the count; " that is truly a magnificent appointment, and henceforth you become a prominent man at court here! But tell me, master, do you still accept in addition the little stipend I have allotted you? "

" Your excellency, I esteem myself happy indeed that your grace has granted it to me."

" And my treasurer has paid out to you the three thousand ducats? "

" Yes, your excellency, he has paid them out to me, and I am now released from all cares."

" You have only one care left, master," said Count Schwarzenberg—" this one care, that I may some day denounce you as a shameful deceiver, who has sold me a bad copy of his own manufacture for an original, and be assured that this deception may bring you to the gallows at any time if I choose it."

* Historical. *Vide* von Orlich, vol. ii, p. 456.

"But, most gracious sir," stammered the painter, pale as death, "I thought you had forgiven me, and——"

"Forgiven, so long as you are a faithful and obedient servant," replied the count, in a severe tone—"forgiven, so long as I can count upon your submission; but forget, that I shall never do. And at the slightest mistake, the least resistance to my commands, I shall remember what a cheat and good-for-nothing you are, and take back my forgiveness. You have the three thousand ducats, but you have not yet given a receipt for them. Sit you down there at my table and write the receipt. I will dictate it to you myself."

Like an obedient slave Gabriel Nietzel slunk to the table, sank down before it, took the pen which the count handed him, and placed it on the paper put before him.

"Write," ordered the count, and with loud voice he dictated: "I, Gabriel Nietzel, painter by profession, hereby affirm that I have this day received from his excellency the Stadtholder in the Mark, Count Schwarzenberg, the sum of three thousand ducats in ready money. This money is the price paid for a painting by Titiano Vecellio, representing the goddess of beauty with a Cupid, who presents Venus her looking-glass. I bought this picture at Cremona for two thousand ducats, and I vow and swear upon my conscience and by all that I hold sacred that this painting, which I have sold to the count for an original painting, is actually an original painting by Titiano Vecellio's own hand."

"Now, master, why do you hesitate? Why do you not write?"

"Oh, sir, have some pity upon me!" groaned the painter. "I can not write that. I can not swear that it is an original by all I hold sacred."

"Why, what does it signify?" laughed the count; "paper is lenient. The advantage to me is only that I can by means of this receipt prove to connoisseurs and picture lovers that I have bought an original painting from you. For the rest, if you will not write, why then, very good. I shall have you arrested on the spot, inform the Electress of what a deceiver you are, have the three thousand ducats forthwith taken away again, and keep you in prison until the suit is made out against

you; then you shall be hung conformably with law and usage."

"Mercy, your excellency, mercy!" gasped Nietzel. "I am writing even now!"

And with trembling hands he completed the receipt, and, on the count's further command, subscribed his name.

Schwarzenberg read it over attentively. "This is a document, my dear painter," he said, smiling, "that may some day bring you to the gallows, for, only see, I have other confirmatory evidence."

From a casket on his table he drew forth a roll of parchment, to which were attached two great seals, hanging by silken strings, and while he unrolled it he beckoned the painter to come near. "See," he said, "this is a testimonial which I have had made out for me at Venice by the Duke di Grimani, affirming that Titian's Venus is his property, and that you spent three months in his palace painting a copy of the original. You see well, dear court-painter Nietzel, that you are completely in my hands, and that I can have you strung up at any time, for the Stadtholder makes short work of cheats and perjurers, and sends them off to the gallows, where they belong! Now say, master, will you to the gallows or will you live in honor and joy as the Electress's court painter and my secret pensioner, my open foe? I give you free choice. Make your own unbiased decision."

"I have no longer any choice," groaned Gabriel Nietzel. "Your excellency well knows that I have no choice. I love life; I have not courage to die, therefore I am your slave."

"Not at all; you are court painter to her highness the Electress, and shall retain your office if you behave yourself wisely and discreetly. This very day you set out on your journey to Holland."

A flash of joy gleamed in the painter's eyes, and his brow cleared. The count remarked it and laughed aloud.

"Oh, my dear! I guess your thoughts," he cried. "You think that when you are in Holland I can no longer reach you, and you will take good care not to put yourself in my power again. But know that my arm is far-reaching, and that I have spies and agents everywhere, who are very devoted to

me because I pay them well. They will find you out wherever you are, and no jurisdiction would refuse delivering up to me a criminal if I demanded him. But besides that, Master Gabriel Nietzel, I hold here a sure pledge for your valuable person."

"What sort of pledge does your excellency mean?" inquired Nietzel anxiously.

"Why, I mean the fair Rebecca, whom you brought with you from the Ghetto of Venice, and whom it pleases you here to give out to be your wife, married at Venice. I hope, however, that you have not committed so heinous a sin as to take a Jewess to wife, for then you should not escape with the gallows, but should be burned at the stake with your cursed Jewess, your bold paramour."

Master Nietzel answered not a word. With a loud groan he sank upon a chair, and covered his face with both his hands, weeping aloud.

"Your fair Rebecca stays behind here with your boy," continued Count Schwarzenberg; "and that she may be in perfect safety and never lack for my protection, I shall have her brought to Spandow, my usual place of residence. There she shall live, well watched and cared for, and there remain until your return. If, however, you have then proved yourself to be a good and obedient servant, I will myself restore to you your Rebecca, and nobody shall dare to molest you."

"Tell me what I have to do, your excellency," said the painter, with cold, desperate decision. "I am ready and willing for everything, for I love my Rebecca and my son, and I will deserve them."

"And it will not be made hard for you, master. You go, then, to Holland, introduce yourself to the Electoral Prince through the Electress's letter of recommendation, and try to make yourself as agreeable and charming to him as possible. When you have succeeded in that, lament to him that life in Holland does not suit you at all, that you are homesick, and entreat most earnestly that the Electoral Prince include you in his traveling suite. This he will naturally do, and you will accompany him on his journey home. Have you understood me, and paid good heed to all my words, Master Nietzel?"

"Yes, your excellency, I have noted each word."

"And you have found without doubt that it is by no means a difficult thing that I require of you. But the journey back, Master Nietzel, the journey back is a very dangerous and bad affair. You know, so many freebooters rove about everywhere, and Westphalia especially is swarming with Swedes and Hessians. If such a troop of soldiers knew beforehand that the Electoral Prince was coming that way, they would certainly lie in wait for him and fall upon him, either for purposes of plunder or in order to carry him off and extort a high ransom for him. The Electoral Prince will not passively submit to capture, but will resist; a battle will ensue, and then it might easily happen that in the heat of conflict a dagger should pierce the Prince or a ball go through his head. Those Swedes and Hessians are wild, fierce soldiers, and the Prince is in perpetual danger, especially in Westphalia. You must represent this to the Electoral Prince, and, to prove to him your zeal and love, you will entreat permission always to go a few hours in advance of him to make sure that the way is free and the Electoral Prince is threatened by no danger. He will therefore each morning acquaint you with the course of his route, and where to arrange night quarters for him, and the point where you shall rejoin him again. You are to precede the Electoral Prince as courier, and if, some day, he should be attacked at a wild spot on the road by a troop of Swedish or Hessian soldiery, robbed, taken prisoner, or even killed, that is no fault of yours, and no one could blame you on that account, for you have proved and evidenced your zeal in the most striking manner. You have comprehended me, Master Nietzel? Have you paid good heed to my words?"

"Yes, your excellency, I have paid good heed, and understood everything well," returned Master Gabriel, on whose brow the sweat stood in great drops.

"Well, I have only this to add: Should the unfortunate accident really happen that the Electoral Prince is attacked by robbers and killed in Westphalia or somewhere else, then look to it, that you be found that day among his defenders, and bear off as token some wound received—for instance, a sabre thrust on the right arm. With this true sign of your

valor and your faithfulness come here to Berlin, and be assured that no one shall dare to suspect you when he witnesses your grief and especially your sabre thrust. It need be no deep wound, and surely the fair Rebecca has a healing balm which she can apply to you. Besides, the Electress will protect you, and be certain that I will stand by you with all my might and influence. And now, master, we have concluded all our business, and you will set out in an hour. I permit you, however, first to take leave of your fair Rebecca and the pretty child. Only, you must not be alone again with the beautiful woman, and therefore I have given orders that your wife and son be brought here. You will be pleased to stay so long at my chamberlain's house; luncheon shall be served there for yourself and your family, and you can take it in the presence of my chamberlain. I have already imparted to you the needed commands, and taken care to have your wife and child fetched directly here. A vehicle is also prepared, ready to convey your wife to Spandow; I have a good, trustworthy housekeeper in my house there, and with her the two can dwell, and shall want for nothing, except it be yourself."

"Most gracious sir," said Gabriel Nietzel, with an expression of deep anguish, "I love my wife and child above everything, and am prepared to suffer and endure everything for them. But if I returned home and found my wife sick, or dead, or, what were yet worse, found her——

"Well, why do you hesitate, master? Faithless, found her faithless, would you say—well, what then?"

"Well, then life would have no value at all to me," said Gabriel Nietzel firmly and decidedly. "Then would it be quite indifferent to me whether I were hanged or burned; then would I desire nothing but to die, and—before my death to avenge myself."

"Ah! I understand you quite well, master, and know you well. You please me uncommonly with your energetic defiance and your hidden threat. In return I, too, will give you an open, candid answer. Master Gabriel Nietzel, I am no enamored fool, who runs after every apronstring, or generally takes any special pleasure in women. I have neither time nor inclination for that, and leave such things to the

young, the idle, and men who have no ambition and no head, but only a heart. I, Master Gabriel, have no heart at all, or at least none now any longer, and I herewith give you my word of honor as a nobleman and gentleman that your lovely Rebecca has nothing to dread from me. On the contrary, I shall have her watched and guarded, as if she were a ward intrusted to me, for whose honor I held myself responsible."

"I thank your excellency—I thank you with my whole heart," said Gabriel Nietzel, breathing more freely; "and now you shall find me ready and willing to execute your commands faithfully and punctiliously."

"It rejoices me, master, it rejoices me to see what a tender husband, or rather lover, you are. I repeat to you, you need feel no anxiety about your Rebecca. She will find herself quite secure in my society, while I fear that the Electoral Prince will have but little safety in your society, but be very often in danger."

"I fear so, too, your excellency," said Gabriel Nietzel, with a feeble effort to smile.

"But a good old proverb has it, 'All they that take the sword shall perish by the sword,'" continued the count. "It is not your fault, master, if the Electoral Prince does not know this proverb. Now farewell, master, and be of good courage, for another good proverb says, 'Fortune smiles on the brave.' Go now, master, my chamberlain awaits you in the antechamber."

"I am going, your excellency," said Gabriel Nietzel humbly. "May almighty God be with us all, and guard my wife and child!"

He bowed low and reverentially, then strode hastily toward the door.

"Gabriel Nietzel, one word more!" called out the count, as the painter stood with his hand already upon the door knob. He turned and slowly came back. "Master Gabriel Nietzel," continued the count, with a mocking laugh, "be so good as to give me the Electress's letter."

The painter drew forth his leather pocketbook, took out the open letter of recommendation, and handed it to the count.

But the latter smilingly rejected it. "You may keep that, master; I have already read that. The other, the second missive from the Electress, you must give me."

Gabriel Nietzel shrank back, and gazed into the count's large, glittering eyes.

"The other writing," he murmured, "the second writing?"

"Why, yes, master, that secret writing, which you have naturally promised to shield with the last drop of your blood, and to hand inviolate into the hands of the Electoral Prince. My God! we know how often such oaths are made, and that hardly one has ever been kept. You have not been made court painter for nothing, with your salary of fifty dollars, free rent, and two suits of clothes. You must give something in return. Give me that second writing of the Electress, the one which you have sworn to hand only to the Electoral Prince; or rather, no, you shall not forswear yourself. Just tell me where you have stuck it, and I shall take it for myself."

"Your excellency, it sticks in my left breast pocket," whispered Gabriel Nietzel. The count laughed aloud, and with one movement drew forth from Master Gabriel's left breast pocket a small packet, wound round with silken strings. With cautious hand, extremely solicitous not to break the string, he untied it, and took out the paper found beneath. Within this, indeed, lay a small, well-sealed letter.

"'To my dear son, the Electoral Prince Frederick William,'" read the count, with loud voice. "You see, I was not mistaken. It is the Electress's handwriting, and it is directed to the Electoral Prince."

"And I have solemnly sworn to give it into no other hands than his," murmured the painter.

"You shall keep your oath, Master Gabriel. Now go into the antechamber. My chamberlain awaits you there, and perhaps your fair Rebecca is also there already!"

"But my letter, your excellency—shall I not have my letter again?"

"Certainly, master, you shall have it again. In a half hour I shall come out myself and give it to you. Oh, fear nothing.

The Prince will not suspect that any strange hand has touched it. Indeed, it concerns me very nearly that the Electoral Prince should put confidence in you, and be convinced of your honesty and good faith. Go now, master, I shall bring the secret epistle back to you unscathed, and put it again into your left breast pocket."

When Master Gabriel Nietzel had crept out slowly and sorrowfully, the count hastened to his writing table, took up flint, tinder, and steel, and made the sparks fly until one fired the tinder and made it glow. Now he held a splinter of wood to the glowing tinder, and by its flame lighted the wax taper in the golden candlestick. Then he quickly fetched, from a secret drawer of his writing table, a small knife with a fine thin blade, heated this at the light, and carefully and adroitly slipped it under the great electoral seal, which he carefully detached from the letter. He laid it carefully upon a small marble slab, and opened the letter. It was a very long, confidential communication from the Electress to her beloved son. With closest attention the count read it twice, and then with great pains folded it up again.

"It is just as I thought," he said softly to himself: "the Electress wishes the longer absence of her son. She intimates to him that she will not be displeased if he marries there, and even promises that she will soften his father's wrath. She counsels him not to come here, and warns him against the evil spirit who has ensnared his father's heart, and surely aims at the life of her dear and noble son. Well, it must be confessed, the Electress is on the right trail. Her mother's instinct gives her insight into the future, and makes her a prophetess. I know it very well, Electress; we two have never loved one another, and have carried on a bitter warfare against each other for twenty years, in which, however, God be thanked, Schwarzenberg has always come off victorious. I hope, too, it will continue to be so, and this letter will furnish me with a good weapon. I shall take a copy of it. Who knows what use I may make of it one of these days, and out of this paper fashion a dagger which may turn against the writer and against the receiver, if it reaches the hands of the Electoral Prince. Yes, I shall take a copy, and then restore the original

to its envelope and affix the seal. And Master Gabriel shall take it to you, my dear Prince. Oh, take heed, and be upon your guard, Frederick William, for your respected mother is right. I am your evil spirit, and I can only stand if you fall; therefore, fall you must! Oh, I have learned much to-day, and received many a good lesson. 'It is better,' so said the Elector to me—'it is better that I have no son than a disobedient son, who resists my will.' But he shall resist you, Elector George William—he will be disobedient to you, and I shall do my part toward making him so. Then how said Count Lesle: 'If the son becomes the father's enemy, then it must be contrived to render the father the son's enemy; thus will the equilibrium be preserved.' Oh, my dear Count Lesle, I know very well the history of Philip of Spain and his disobedient and rebellious son Don Carlos. Take care, take care, Electoral Prince Frederick William, that you share not the fate of Don Carlos, and that your father punish you not as King Philip did his son!"

BOOK II.

I.—The Double Rendezvous.

The Princess Ludovicka Hollandine walked restlessly to and fro in her apartment. Sometimes she stopped at the window and listened intently; then, finding all without still dark and silent, she stepped back and continued her restless walk, at times listening again at door or window. While passing the great Venetian mirror on the wall, on both sides of which were placed two silver candlesticks with immense burning wax tapers, she caught sight of her image as brightly and distinctly as if it had been a portrait, and she drew nearer, like a connoisseur bent on examining a picture. She saw before her within the carved gilt framework a beautiful maiden's form, in sky-blue satin robe that fell in wide, heavy folds around her full and blooming figure. The low-necked bodice left wholly uncovered her dazzling white shoulders, and beneath the transparent gauze of her sleeves shone the fair white arms as from out a silver cloud. Her head rested proudly and gracefully upon the slender alabaster neck, and was crowned by a profusion of black hair, caught up behind in great loops, and fastened with bows of blue satin ribbon. On the broad and lofty brow it was massed in the form of a diadem, with numberless pretty little ringlets. Her cheeks were pale, but of that clear, transparent paleness which has nothing in common with sickness and suffering, but is only peculiar to vehement, passionate natures, with whom the cheeks are colorless, because all the blood concentrates in the heart. Her large dark eyes had at the same time a languid, melting expression and the fire and glow of passion; the finely cut, slightly curved nose, the firm, somewhat projecting chin, indicated energy,

and decision; and around the full, rosy lips hovered a singular expression of good nature and frivolity.

She contemplated herself for a long time, then a well-pleased smile passed over her fascinating countenance. "I am beautiful," she said, "yes, I am beautiful, and I believe those are right who suppose that I resemble my great-grandmother, the beautiful Mary Stuart. O Mary! you beautiful, bewitching Queen—oh teach me the arts which won for you the hearts of all men; inspire me with the glow of passion, let it flash forth from me in bright flames, and grant that these flames may kindle and fire the one I love, whom I will possess, and on whom all my hopes and desires are fixed! But hush! did I not hear steps?"

She again hurried to the window and listened, holding her breath. A shrill, thrice-repeated whistle was heard, sounding strangely awful in the stillness of the night.

"It is he," murmured the Princess, "it is the concerted signal."

She took from a table standing near a package consisting of cords and knots, and unrolled it. It was a rope ladder, twisted artfully and durably of fine cords, and held together at the top by a strong iron ring. This ring the Princess now slipped over the iron hook which was fixed in the middle of the cross work of the window, and lowered the rope ladder, while at the same time, as if in answer, she repeated the whistle in the same manner. Then she bounded back from the window, flew through the room to both doors, assured herself that the bolts were secured, and with hasty hands dropped the curtains over them.

"No one can hear us, no one can see us, no one can get in here," she murmured; "he may come."

A slight rustling was heard below the window, then a dark mass appeared in the open space, and a closely muffled manly form jumped from the windowsill down into the apartment. Wholly enveloped in the folds of an ample black cloak, whose hood was thrown over the head and drawn far over the face, it was impossible to recognize the visitor's features.

The person thus disguised curiously and inquisitively turned his head to both sides of the room, strode rapidly across

it, lifted the curtains from both doors, examined the fastenings of the bolts, went to the divan, peered under it, and, after completing this silent inspection of the chamber, returned to the window, loosened the cord from the hook, drew in the rope-ladder, and closed the window.

Princess Ludovicka Hollandine, standing in the middle of the apartment, had watched this singular demeanour on the part of the mysterious intruder with growing astonishment. She had first held out her arms to greet the expected, the longed-for, to press him to her beating heart, but, finding that he came not to embrace her, she had slowly dropped her arms again. She had looked toward him with a tender glance, a fascinating smile, but when he hastened not to her, her glance had grown dark and her smile had vanished; and now, when he did approach her, she assumed an air of distant, proud reserve. He seemed not to see it, and, bending his knee before her, his head being still concealed, he pressed the hem of her garment reverentially to his lips.

"Most beautiful, most condescending of all princesses," he whispered softly, "I sue for pardon, for forgiveness."

The Princess shrank back, and a glowing flush overspread her cheeks. "My God!" she murmured, "that is not the voice——"

"Not the voice of the one whom your highness desires to see," said the kneeling figure, concluding her sentence for her. "Yes, most amiable Princess, your tender, sensitive heart is not deceived. I am not the Electoral Prince of Brandenburg. I am——"

"Count d'Entragues, the French ambassador," cried the Princess, as the disguised man now threw back the hood of his mantle, and lifted up to her his youthfully handsome, smiling face.

"Scream not, most gracious lady," said he, hastily, "and do not scold me, either; but be merciful and forgive me. I lie here at your feet and entreat for pardon, and will not rise until you have granted it."

The Princess still kept her astonished and inquiring glance fixed upon him, but the sight of this handsome young man disarmed her wrath.

"Stand up, Count d'Entragues," she said—"stand up and account to me for this daring crime."

"Your highness is right," returned he, "it is a daring crime, and only the extremest necessity could have driven me to this. I shall immediately therefore have the honor of explaining all this to the lovely, bewitching Princess Ludovicka Hollandine."

With youthful agility he arose from his knees, took off his cloak, which he carelessly threw into a corner of the apartment, and presented himself to the Princess in a gold-embroidered velvet suit, richly trimmed with lace and ribbons. Ludovicka fixed her large eyes upon the proud and dazzling apparition of the young count, and the angry flashing of her eyes softened.

"Sir Count," she said, imperiously, "without evasion and without circumlocution explain to me directly the meaning of this!"

"You permit me to do so, then, fairest Princess? You thereby empower me to remain a half hour in your charming presence?"

And while the count thus questioned, he took the hand of the Princess and covered it with kisses. Then, with graceful gallantry and solemn seriousness, as if they had been in the midst of a grand courtly assemblage, he conducted her to the divan. There she seated herself, and he bowed before her with all the formality and obsequiousness of a courtier as he took his place beside her.

"Now your highness desires to know above all things how I can have dared to intrude here at so unusual an hour, and without the shadow of permission," he said with his mellifluous, insinuating voice. "Most gracious Princess, I confess that you are well justified in this curiosity, and I hasten to gratify it. Your grace expected a visitor indeed, but not the tiresome, unbidden Count d'Entragues—not the ambassador and servant of King Louis XIII or Cardinal Richelieu, but you expected an eloquent, handsome young Prince, who loves the Princess Ludovicka Hollandine with passionate enthusiasm, and to whom after long and vain entreaties she has at last granted a rendezvous."

"My God!" said the Princess, with an expression of horror, "how know you that, count?"

"My most gracious Princess, I have a magician in my service, who acquaints me with everything that happens here at court and, above all things, in the palace of the Queen of Bohemia, and first of all in the apartments of the Princess Ludovicka Hollandine."

"And the name of this magician is?"

"Ducato, sweetest Princess, Ducato. Ah! if you knew what dear, precious secrets this magician has imparted to me, how loquaciously he blabs out to me everything that the fairest Princess in the world thinks and does by day and by night! I know, for example, how the lovely Princess stays with her mother with ever so much seriousness, goes with her to church, visits respectfully the Stadtholder of Holland, and fondles and pets the little Princess Louise; how she carries on her studies, plays the lute, paints and sings. But, God be thanked! life consists not entirely of days, but happily has its nights likewise."

"What do you mean by that, Sir Count d'Entragues?"

"I mean," replied the Count, while he smilingly bent over closer to the Princess—"I mean that here at The Hague there is a wonderful, charming combination of young gentlemen and noble young ladies, who have laid themselves out expressly to embellish these nights, and to indemnify themselves for their somber, gloomy days by joyous, merry nights. It is a secret order, into which it is a distinguished honor to be received, and which is shrouded in deepest secrecy. Never would a lady own that she belongs to it, and yet they say that the fairest, most exalted, most virtuous ladies press to be received into this order. It is not known of any of the ladies of the court that they belong to it, but it is suspected of each. No one can say that he has seen this or that one among the noble and virtuous ladies there, for at all the reunions of the members of the order the ladies wear small half-masks, and it is the first and most sacred law of the order that no man dares to lay so much as a finger upon this mask—this precious secret of the ladies. Moreover, they appear only in Grecian robes, so that it is difficult to recognize the beautiful

forms of the ladies again in their elaborate court dresses and with their stiff Fontanges. The name of this secret society is Media Nocte, and it is especially an honor to belong to it, for nobody is admitted who has not stood his probation—that is to say, shown that he has acquired considerable proficiency in some art, and excels in it. He, therefore, who can not sing or play on the lute, paint or improvise, speak eloquently, or by some gift contribute to the enjoyment of the company, can never arrive at the distinction of becoming a member of this order. When, therefore, it is whispered of a gentleman that he belongs to the order, he is supposed to be not merely an accomplished gentleman, but an entertaining companion, a favorite of the Muses. If this secret is whispered of a lady, then we look upon her with admiration, rapture, joy, for we know that we have before us one of those choice, enchanting, and rare beings, who are exalted above all prejudice; who believe not, with zealots and ascetics, that we live only to die, but who joyfully acknowledge that we live to live, and, therefore, that the noblest, worthiest task proposed is to render this life as pleasant as possible."

"Why do you tell me all this, dear count?" asked the Princess impatiently.

"It is true," replied he, smiling; "why should I tell you what you know already? I tell it to your highness in order to prove to you that I, thanks to my little magician Ducato, know the secret of the Media Nocte; I tell it to you in order now to whisper a secret in your ear: the Princess Ludovicka Hollandine belongs to the society, she is a member of the order of the Media Nocte."

The Princess only with difficulty suppressed a shriek, and stared with horror at the smiling countenance of the young count.

"Hush, gracious lady, hush!" whispered the latter while he took her hand and imprinted a reverential kiss upon the tips of her rosy fingers. "Why should you wish to deny what is so genial and so delightful? My magician Ducato always tells me the truth; why should we dispute it? But it was not that which your highness wished to learn of me. You would ask me, how I know that the Electoral Prince of Bran-

denburg loves the beautiful Princess Ludovicka Hollandine, and was to have his first rendezvous with her to-day. Once more, it is the magician Ducato who has told me that; yes, that good, obliging magician has done yet more for me. He put into my hands the pretty little note which the Princess Ludovicka sent yesterday through her confidential maid-servant to the confidential valet of the Electoral Prince, before the Prince had read it himself."

"That is shameful—that is unheard of!" said the Princess, with glowing cheeks and tears in her eyes. "It is an abominable piece of deceit on the part of my maid, and she shall pay for it. To-morrow morning I shall dismiss her, and——"

"That she may tell all the world the little secrets of her exalted mistress?" asked Count d'Entragues. "Oh, no, your highness; the maid is perfectly innocent of deceit, and it was only the magician Ducato who played the Princess's pretty little note into my hands. And will my sweetest lady know now what I did with the little note? I read it first, then—— I saw there that a rendezvous was granted the Prince at one o'clock. I took a very small sharp knife and——"

"And? My God, go on! What did you with the knife?"

"I very delicately erased and altered the number from a one into a two. Then I refolded the note, and handed it to my magician for further preferment to the Prince."

"The Electoral Prince has received my note, then?" asked the Princess. "He will consequently——"

"Come at two o'clock, instead of one o'clock," replied the count, and he intercepted the look which Ludovicka cast upon the large French clock upon the mantelpiece. "Yes, we have just a half hour before the Prince makes his appearance, and I hope that will suffice to obtain your highness's pardon for my boldness, and to establish a good understanding between myself and the most spirituelle, most genial, and most beautiful Princess of all the European courts. Will your highness be kind enough to grant me a hearing?"

The Princess smiled imperceptibly. "The question comes somewhat late," she said. "If you had asked it while you stood there on the windowsill, before you came into my room,

then I should have replied: 'No, be off! No, you are a shameless person, who has dared to spy out my secrets, to bribe my servants, and to deceive me, while he approaches me in a way that he knew perfectly was not open to him.' But you are here now; alas! I have not the power to expel you, and to punish you before all the world as you deserve."

"O Princess! as if your harsh and cruel words were not a punishment, which touches my heart more sensibly than the cut of a sword or thrust of a dagger!"

The Princess seemed not to have heard these words of the count, spoken with artistic effect, and continued: "You are here now, and I will at least know what inspired you to run this unheard-of risk of forcing yourself upon my notice. I am therefore ready to listen to you, on condition that you try to be short and not burden me too long with your presence."

"Permit me to thank you, most condescending Princess," cried the count, while he sank from the ottoman down upon his knees, and pressed his glowing lips upon the hem of the Princess's robe. "I thank you, and swear that I will not overstep the limit prescribed, and depart at two with the first stroke of the clock."

"Rise, count, rise and speak," said Ludovicka, in commanding tones, and with the full dignity of a Princess.

Count d'Entragues again resumed his seat upon the divan. "Your highness commands now that I explain how I could have dared to come here?"

"I confess that I am very anxious to hear this explanation."

"Well, then, your highness is young, very young indeed, hardly eighteen years old, but you possess, in addition to a soft and tender heart, an almost masculine intellect. I apprehend from this that you interest yourself in politics."

"There you are entirely mistaken, count. I hate, I abhor politics, and when my mother proposes to talk politics with me I always run away."

"That is bad, very bad, your highness, for I am forced to talk politics to you. But I shall not be tedious, but limit myself to what is absolutely necessary. I shall therefore begin, in order to give your highness a proof of my rever-

ential, unlimited confidence, by telling you what no one here knows—by telling you why I have been sent here and what my errand is. Princess, I have been ostensibly sent here to the Stadtholder of Orange and as ambassador from the King of France to the Sovereign States. In reality, I have been sent to two entirely different persons—to the Electoral Prince of Brandenburg and to the Princess Ludovicka Hollandine."

"To me?" asked the Princess, and her beautiful face expressed the most undisguised astonishment.

"Yes, to yourself, most gracious Princess. And does your highness know why? Because our spies here, as well as the gentlemen of the French embassy to Holland, had reported that the Electoral Prince of Brandenburg was smitten with the most glowing love for your highness."

The Princess blushed with pleasure, and a wondrous smile lit up her radiant countenance. "But," asked she, "how does it concern the court of France whom the Electoral Prince of Brandenburg loves?"

"It concerns the court of France very nearly, your highness. I can not avoid now burdening your highness a little with hated politics, while I explain to you how it comes that the love of the Electoral Prince of Brandenburg is a state affair for the European courts. It comes from this, your highness, because the Electoral Prince, however small and insignificant his house, however inconsiderable, too, his future realm of Brandenburg, is still a very important personage. Three crowns are hovering in the air above his head, and if he obtains all three he will be a mighty Prince, and his sword may turn the scale in the balance of peace and war."

"What three crowns are those which hover thus above the Prince's head?"

"There is first the crown of the dukedom of Prussia, with which the King of Poland has to invest the Electoral Prince of Brandenburg, and which the Elector of Saxony would be too glad to see fall upon his own head. Then, in the second place, there is the crown of the duchy of Pomerania, which belongs to the house of Brandenburg by right of inheritance, and which the Swedes are struggling for; and finally, in the third place, there is the crown of the duchy of Cleves, Juliers,

and Berg, which the Emperor of Germany has indeed adjudged to that house, but which is so torn by Hessians and Spaniards, by the States, by the Swedes and various robbers, that probably hardly anything at all of it will be left. But nevertheless, there it is, and if the future Elector of Brandenburg actually succeeds in uniting upon his own head these three crowns, besides the electoral hat of Brandenburg, then he will be mighty and influential, and have a full sounding voice in the concert of the European princes. But now you must know that the Elector of Brandenburg is sickly, and has not many more years to live. Then the Electoral Prince Frederick William becomes his successor, and it is only needful to have seen the Prince for a few hours, to have looked into his fiery eyes, to be made aware that he will not tread in his father's footsteps, that he will not be the submissive vassal of the German Emperor, a mere tool in the hands of his minister, but that his efforts will be directed to making himself a free, independent Prince, and his country a strong, powerful, and self-sustaining state. The Minister von Schwarzenberg, the almighty representative of the present Elector, knows this very well, and on this account dreads and hates the Electoral Prince; he has therefore removed him from his father's court in order to take away all influence from him, and he would esteem himself happy if some lucky accident or criminal hand should free him from this inconvenient successor to the throne. But heretofore accident has not favored him; nor has he yet dared to press the murderous hand into his service; and he has therefore been compelled to devise some other method for securing his future, and so enchaining the Electoral Prince that he, too, may remain the Emperor's obedient vassal. As the best means for attaining this object it has occurred to them to bind the Electoral Prince to the German imperial house by marriage, and to receive him into the Hapsburg family. The Archduke Leopold, the future Emperor, has a very pretty daughter. She is intellectual, ardent, a strict Catholic, and has at heart the greatness of the Hapsburg house and the German Emperor. This princess, or rather archduchess, has been selected for the Electoral Prince of Brandenburg, and on that account

the Electoral Prince is now to return home, for the Elector and his Minister Schwarzenberg are much bent upon the imperial alliance, and have already promised that the Electoral Prince shall make a visit to the imperial court. But, excuse me, I am misusing your indulgence, Princess. I am holding forth to you a long-winded political harangue, forgetting entirely how you hate politics, what a heinous crime I am committing, and that I weary you."

"You do not weary me at all," replied Ludovicka quickly. "On the contrary, you interest me greatly. Only go on. I am listening attentively. You said that the Electoral Prince was to return home in order to make a visit to the imperial court, and to marry an archduchess of Austria?"

"Pardon me, your highness. I only said this was the new plan of the imperial court, and consequently of the Minister Schwarzenberg and his Elector. And, indeed, the plan is good, for the son-in-law of the Emperor would be wholly dependent upon Austria, and if then the three pending crowns should settle upon his brow, it would be the same as if Austria herself wore them. Then they would cause the young married couple to make an agreement respecting claims of inheritance, in accordance with which the survivor should become heir to the first deceased. Then, some day, the Electoral Prince, or the young Elector, would have the misfortune to fall from his horse, or be pierced while hunting by some missent bullet, or fall a victim to a sudden problematical sickness; in short, he would die, and his wife would be his heiress, and through her the Electoral Mark Brandenburg, the duchies of Prussia, Pomerania, and Cleves, accrue to the imperial house. This would be then to put an end to the long, fearful war, to make peace with Sweden by relinquishing Pomerania to her, and, in order to see this war finally ended, which has desolated the whole of Germany, the other German powers would acquiesce in Pomerania becoming Swedish, and Cleves, Brandenburg, and Prussia Hapsburgian."

"Sir Count!" cried the Princess, "now you become tiresome, for you have digressed from your subject!"

"From the Electoral Prince? Oh, no; I have already come to him again, fairest Princess! I said all Germany

would consent to this marriage. Poland, too, would rather invest the Catholic imperial house with the Prussian crown than the reformed Elector, and prefer an Austrian neighbor as friend to a Russian; only two European powers would look askance upon this union, and consequently do all they possibly could to prevent its consummation."

"And who are these two powers, Sir Count?"

"One power is France, who would never consent to so striking an aggrandizement of the house of Austria, and can not passively submit to see it spread itself so extensively north, west, and east."

"And the second power, count?"

"The second power is the Princess Ludovicka Hollandine of the Palatinate, who would never give up the handsome Electoral Prince, and would snatch at any means of preventing his marriage with any one else. Will you condescend to acknowledge that I have told the truth?"

"Yes!" cried the Princess passionately—"yes, you have told the truth! I love him, and the only happiness upon earth for me is in becoming his wife!"

"Princess, I presume to make a proposal to you. Let the two powers that wish not the marriage with an Austrian archduchess conclude together a league offensive and defensive. The power France accedes to this with joy. It promises to further and support the second power in all her plans, to lend her efficient aid, that the Princess Ludovicka Hollandine may wed the Electoral Prince of Brandenburg."

"Oh, heavens, count, you would do that, you——"

"France will do that, not I," said the count passionately. "No, not I, Princess, for you know well that I was rash enough to lift my eyes to your heavenly apparition, my heart—— But hush, you poor, foolish heart, suffer and be dumb, sacrifice yourself, and only busy yourself in making happy the sweet object of your warm and glowing love! Princess, you love the Electoral Prince! France offers you her assistance that you may marry him. This marriage will throw the Elector as well as the German Emperor into the greatest rage; they will both refuse their consent; they will require Holland to deliver up the Electoral Prince; they will pro-

claim invalid the marriage between two minor lovers, and will cut off the Electoral Prince from all means of subsistence."

"Oh, that is shocking, you give me a glimpse of a background which fills me with dread and horror," lamented the Princess.

"Fear nothing, dread nothing," whispered the count. "France is here to support you. France offers the young couple an asylum in Paris, and will receive them at her court with pleasure. France will take care that the Electoral Prince and his wife want for nothing; she will pay him rich subsidies, contribute vast sums of money that the Electoral Prince may present his young bride with a costly outfit; and finally, in the name of her mother, the Electress of the Palatinate, provide the Princess with a truly princely income."

"How kind, how generous that is of France!" cried Ludovicka. "It will promote my happiness, it will aid me in being united with my beloved; it thereby pledges me to eternal gratitude, and never shall I forget that I owe to France the happiness of my whole life."

"And that, adored Princess, that is the only thing that France claims for its good offices—a little gratitude! A faithful remembrance of its good offices rendered, the sure promise that the Elector Frederick William of Brandenburg will never range himself on the side of the enemies of France, never league himself with the house of Austria against France, but forever remain the faithful ally and friend of France!"

"I promise you that—I give you my solemn word for it! Oh, we are no ingrates, to reward you with ingratitude; be sure and certain of that. The Electoral Prince loves me; he will bid all welcome that makes a union with me possible; he will be eternally grateful to those who will lend us a helping hand."

"And—forgive me, your highness, for asking one question—has he offered you his hand; has he made you a formal proposal of marriage?"

"He has sworn a thousand times that he loves me; he has so long and so often besought me to grant him an interview that I have at last done so—all the rest follows."

"Now," said the count, with a meaning smile, "that is

just as one may take it. In any case, this interview will be useful and to the purpose, and your highness must now bring the Prince to declare himself formally."

"My heavens!" cried the Princess impatiently, "I tell you that he has very often declared himself, that he has sworn to me a thousand times that of all the world he loves me, and me alone! What more would you have him say?"

"Princess, you are an angel of innocence and maidenly simplicity. When I say the Prince must declare himself, I mean by that that he must sue for your hand; he must say to you in so many words that he wishes to marry you."

"Good! he shall do so, even to-day. Oh, sir, it pleases you to doubt the love of the Electoral Prince? You dare to think it possible that he may be only amusing himself with me—that he has no serious designs? I shall prove to you that you are mistaken—that you wrong me and the Electoral Prince alike by your doubt. This very night he shall offer me his hand—this very night I shall engage myself to him!"

"And to-morrow night the nuptials must take place!" cried the count.

The Princess shrank back and a glowing blush overspread her cheeks. "So soon—to-morrow night?" she murmured. "My God! this haste——"

"Is necessary, if the marriage is ever to take place at all, Princess. There is a common but very wise proverb which says, 'Strike while the iron is hot.' Strike, Princess, strike, for I tell you what does not happen to-morrow night will be utterly impossible the day after. We have fortunately our secret agents everywhere, as well here as at the courts of Berlin and Königsberg, and we therefore know that both Count Schwarzenberg and the Elector have sent their messengers here to induce the Electoral Prince to a speedy departure, and to threaten him with his father's wrath in case he should allow himself to marry the Princess Ludovicka Hollandine."

"But that is abominable!" cried the Princess, with tears in her eyes.

"One of these messengers," continued the count, "and indeed the messenger of Count Schwarzenberg, as I suspect, has already arrived this evening, and the Electoral Prince has

already received him. The other will probably come to-morrow, and if you then still delay, if you do not surprise the Prince in the first storm of his indignation, and thereby lead him to bind himself to you by a secret marriage, then all is lost, and the two powers Hollandine and France are conquered by Brandenburg and Austria."

"That shall not be!" cried the Princess, jumping up, and with hasty steps moving to and fro. "No, we are not to be conquered! They shall not tear my beloved from me!"

"Well, Princess, if you are firmly resolved, then I beg as a favor to be allowed to be of service to you."

"Yes, help me—advise me."

"I have counted upon your love and your energy, Princess, and therefore have already drawn up a stated plan. Will you hear it?"

"Not merely hear, but execute it, too, if it is at all practicable," cried Ludovicka, while she remained standing in the center of the room, and turned her large, flaming eyes upon the count, who had likewise arisen and advanced smilingly toward her.

"Well, then, Princess, the plan is short and simple. The Prince makes you to-night his offer of marriage."

"Yes, this very night," said she, proudly.

"He swears that he will marry you as soon as possible."

"Oh, you may be sure of that; he will swear it to me."

"Own to him that you have friends on whose aid and assistance you can count, but let him not suspect who these friends are. Then lead the conversation to the Media Nocte—— But, my heavens!" exclaimed the count, interrupting himself, while he looked as if accidentally at the clock, "it only wants now a few minutes of two o'clock, and the Electoral Prince will certainly come punctually, and therefore will be here directly. I have written out all that it is necessary that you will have the complaisance to do between this and to-morrow. Read it over at your leisure, and impress it rightly upon your mind. Here is the paper, and may my writing find a hearing and favor! If such be the case, as I hope and desire, then will your highness have the goodness to open your window a little at ten o'clock and display from

it an orange-colored ribbon. All the rest will take care of itself, and what your highness has to do is on the paper. I hasten to withdraw, that your highness may have time to read my writing."

"But if the Prince should come now?" asked Ludovicka anxiously—"if he should see a man descending from my window?"

"You are right, Princess; that is to be dreaded; and I, too, have considered that. I will not leave through the window."

"Not through the window? But in what other way would you——"

"Go away, would you say? By yonder door! I know perfectly well that it leads into the Princess's private apartment, and thence into the antechamber. Oh, I know the Castle Doornward well, for is it not the residence of the Electress of the Palatinate and her fair daughter the Princess? Therefore I have had drawn out for myself an exact plan of it. Moreover, your waiting maid Alice awaits me in the antechamber. Forgive her for not having been able to withstand the persuasions of her compatriot, the magician Ducato. Alice will permit me to slip out of the castle by a back door. And now, adored Princess and exalted Electress of the future, permit your most faithful and devoted servant ere he depart once more to press your beloved hand to his lips, and to tell you how inexpressibly happy—and, alas! how inexpressibly wretched—it makes him that he can and—must assist in marrying the Princess Ludovicka to the Electoral Prince."

With a bewitching smile the Princess held out her hand to him. "Count d'Entragues," she said, "I shall be eternally grateful to you for your self-sacrifice and good faith. I shall esteem myself happy if some day I may find an opportunity of proving this to you. Farewell!"

He pressed a long, glowing kiss upon her hand. "Farewell!" he said. "When I see you again, Princess, I shall accompany you to the altar, and must witness the transformation of the Princess Ludovicka into an Electoral Princess of Brandenburg, and in my heart will be prayers, but also tears! Farewell!"

He sprang up, crossed the room with light, quick steps, unbolted the door, and vanished behind the curtain. The Princess watched him until he had disappeared, and, after she had convinced herself that he was actually gone, and had bolted the door again, she took out the paper and read over its contents slowly and with most serious attention.

As she read, brighter and brighter became her face, constantly more radiant the smile upon her rosy lips. "Yes," she cried, after she had twice read it through, "that will do —it shall be so! To-morrow in the Media Nocte I will——"

A loud shrill whistle sounded. "He comes!" whispered she, "he comes!"

With trembling hands she thrust the paper into a casket belonging to her writing table, and hurried to the window to open it and lower the rope ladder.

At this moment the whistle rang forth for the second time, its tones following one another in quick succession.

"It is he—it is my beloved," murmured Ludovicka, and with a happy smile she listened out into the night.

II.—The Electoral Prince.

The Princess had not long to wait. The groaning and creaking of the rope ladder already betrayed the presence of its burden. Ludovicka leaned farther out of the window and saw the dark shadow mount higher and higher; already she heard his breath, and now—oh, now he was there, swung himself in at the window, and without saying a word, without seeing anything but herself, only herself alone, he fell on his knees before the Princess, flung both arms round her waist, and, looking up at her with a beaming smile, whispered, "I thank you, Ludovicka, I thank you!"

She bent down to him with an expression of unutterable love, and their bright eyes met in a tender glance. They formed a beautiful picture, those two youthful figures combining in so lovely a group. She, bending over him with a

look brimful of love, he gazing up at her with animated, radiant eyes. The full light of the wax candles in the silver chandelier illuminated his countenance, and Ludovicka looked down upon him with a smile as blissful as if she had now seen him for the first time.

"You are handsome," she whispered, softly, while with her white hand she stroked his dark-brown hair, which fell in long waving curls, like the mane of a lion, over both powerful shoulders. "Yes, you are handsome," she smilingly repeated, and playfully passed her hand over his features, over the lofty, thoughtful brow, the energetic, slightly prominent, aquiline nose, over the full glowing lips, which breathed an ardent kiss upon the hand that glided past.

"Now let me look into your eyes and see what is written in them," continued Ludovicka, and she stooped lower over the kneeling youth, and looked long into those large, dark-blue eyes, which gazed up at her, lustrous and bright as two twinkling stars.

"Have you read what is in my eyes?" he asked, after a long pause, in which only their glances and their beating hearts had spoken to one another. "Have you read it, my Ludovicka?"

With a charmingly pouting expression she shook her head. "No," said she sadly, "I can not read it, or perhaps there is nothing in them, or at least nothing for me!"

He jumped up, and, throwing his arms around her neck, leaned his face close against hers, flashed his burning glance deep into her eyes, and in doing so smiled a blissful, childlike smile.

"Now read," he said, almost imperiously—"read and tell me what is in my eyes!"

She slowly shook her head. "There is nothing in them," she whispered. "But, indeed, how can I know? The Electoral Prince Frederick William is so very learned, and it is only my own fault that I can not read what is in his eyes. It is written in Latin, or perhaps in Greek!"

"No, you mischievous, you cruel one," cried he impatiently. "You just will not understand and read what is plainly and intelligibly written in my eyes. My heart speaks

neither Latin nor Greek, but German, and the eyes are the lips with which the heart speaks."

"Well then, tell me, Cousin Frederick William, what is in your eyes?"

"I will tell you, Cousin Ludovicka Hollandine. They say: I love you! I love you! And nothing but I love you!"

"But whom? To whom are these three little words addressed?"

"To you, you heartless, you wicked one, to you are these words addressed. But not little words are they, as you say; they are great words, full of meaning: for a world, a whole human life, my whole future, lies in these three words—I love you."

He embraced her and pressed her close to his heart, and Ludovicka leaned her head upon his shoulder and looked up at him with moist and glowing eyes. He nodded smilingly to her, and then took her head between his two hands and gazed long and rapturously upon her beautiful face.

"So I have you at last, and hold you, my golden butterfly," he said gently. "You are mine at last, and I hold you fast by your transparent wings, so that you can not flutter away from me again to fly up to the sun, the flowers, the trees! O my butterfly! you pretty creature, made of ethereal dust and rainbow splendor, of air and sunshine, of lightning flashes and icy coldness, are you actually mine, then? May I trust you? Think not I am only a poor little flower on which you may smilingly rock yourself an hour in the sunshine, and enjoy the perfume which mounts up from its heart's blood, and the love songs which its sighs waft to you in the breeze! Tell me, you butterfly, will you no more flutter away, but be true and never more distress and torment me?"

"I have never wished to distress and torment you, cousin."

"And yet you have done it, so often, so grievously!" cried he, and his handsome open countenance grew quickly dark, while his eyes flashed with indignation. "Ludovicka," he continued, "you have tortured and tormented me, and often when I have seen how you smiled upon others and exchanged glances with them, and allowed yourself to be pleased by their homage, their devotion—often have I felt then as if

an iron fist had seized my heart to tear it from my breast, and felt as if I enjoyed this, and as if I exulted with delight over my own wrath. Tear out my foolish heart, you iron fist of pain, said I to myself; cast it far from me, this childish heart, for then shall I be happy and glad, then shall I no longer feel love but be freed from the fearful bondage it imposes upon me. How often, Ludovicka, how often have I been ashamed of these chains, and bitten at them, as the lion, languishing in a dungeon, bites at his."

"Truly, fair sir," cried Ludovicka, as arm in arm she and her beloved moved toward the divan—"truly, to hear you talk, one would suppose that love was a misfortune and a pain."

"It is so indeed," said he, almost savagely—"yes, love is a misfortune and a pain; for with love comes doubt, jealousy, and jealousy is the most dreadful pain. And then I have often said to myself as I wept about you for rage and woe because I have seen you more friendly with others than with me—I have often said to myself that it is unworthy of a man to allow himself to be subjected by love, unworthy to make a woman the mistress of his thoughts, of his desires; that a man should strive for higher aims, aspire to nobler things."

"To nobler things? Now tell me, you monster, is there anything nobler than a woman? Is there a higher aim than to win her love?"

"No; that is true, there is nothing higher!" cried he passionately. "No there is nothing nobler. Oh, forgive me, Ludovicka, I was a heathen, who denies his goddess, and finds fault with her out of excess of feeling. My God! I have suffered so much through you and your cruelty! And I tell you if you had not now at last heard my petition, at last granted me a rendezvous, then——"

"Then you would have killed yourself," interrupted she —"then you would have stabbed yourself on the threshold of my door, while you cursed me. Is not that what you would have said?"

"No; I would have found out the man whom you preferred to me, and I would have killed him, and you I would

have despised—that is what I would have said. But no, no, I can not conceive of or imagine myself despising you—loving you no more! My whole soul is yours, and my heart flames up toward you as if it were one vast and living lake of fire. You smile; you do not believe me, Ludovicka! But I tell you, if you do not believe me, neither do you believe in love itself."

"I do not believe in it, either, cousin; and you are quite right, your heart is a lake of fire. You know, though, all fires become extinct?"

"When fuel is denied them, Ludovicka—not till then. They burn constantly, if supplied with constant fuel."

"So then, my Electoral Prince, my heart is the fuel you would require?"

"Yes, my Princess, I do require it. I implore it of you. Be good, Ludovicka, torment me not. Let me at last feel myself blessed—let me put my arm around you, and say and think, she is mine! mine she remains!"

"Mine she remains!" repeated Ludovicka, sighing. "Alas! Frederick, how long ere you will no longer wish that I were yours; how long ere all the oaths of your heart will be forgotten and forever hushed? I have heard it from all women —they all say that the love of men is perishable; that, like a flash of lightning, it shines forth with vivid blaze, then vanishes away."

"And they have all deceived you or been deceived themselves, Ludovicka. The love of men never expires, unless forcibly extinguished by women. Be trustful, my Ludovicka, trustful, and pious, and let love, holy and still, ardent and glowing, penetrate your heart, just as I do, without trembling, without hesitancy, and without the fear of men."

"You love me, then, love me truly?" asked Ludovicka, tenderly clinging to him.

"I love you with wrath and pain, love you with rapture and delight, love you in spite of the whole world! I will know nothing, consider nothing, hear nothing of the folly of the wise, of the irrationality of the rational, of the stupidity of the sage. I will know nothing and hear nothing, but that I love you! Just as you are, so cruel and so lovely, so coquet-

tish and so innocent, so passionate and yet so cold. Oh, you are an enchantress, who has changed my whole being and taken possession of all my thoughts and all my feelings. Formerly I loved my parents, feared my father, respected my friend and early teacher, the faithful Leuchtmar, listened to his counsels, followed his advice. But now all that is past—all is swallowed up. I think only of you, only know you, only hear you."

"And yet a day will come when I shall call upon you in vain, a day when you shall no longer hear my voice."

"It will be the day of my death."

"No; the day when you leave this place. The day on which you return to your native land to become there a reigning lord, and leave the poor humbled Princess Ludovicka behind here deserted and alone."

"But you? Will you not go with me?" he asked, in amazement. "Will not my country be yours? And if I am a reigning lord, will you not stand as sovereign lady by my side?"

"I?" asked she, bewildered. "How do you mean? I do not understand you."

"I mean," he whispered softly, while he clasped her closely to himself—"I mean that you shall accompany me as my wife."

"But!" cried she, smiling, and with an expression of radiant joy—"but you have never said that I should be your wife."

"Have I not told you that I love you? Have I not been repeating to you for a year that I love you? And does it not naturally follow that you and you alone are to be my wife?"

"But they will not suffer it, Frederick!" cried she, with an expression of pain. "No, they will never suffer you to make me your wife."

"Who will not suffer it, Ludovicka?"

"Your parents will not suffer it, and the great Lord von Schwarzenberg, who rules your father, as my mother has told me, and Herr von Leuchtmar, who rules you and——"

"Nobody rules me," interrupted he indignantly, and a flush of anger or shame suffused his face. "No, nobody rules

me, and I shall never be subject to any other will than my own."

"So you say now, Frederick, while you look into my eyes, while you are at my side. But to-morrow, when I am no longer by, when your tutor shall have proved with his cold, matter-of-fact arguments that the poor Princess Ludovicka is no fit match for the Electoral Prince of Brandenburg—to-morrow, when your tutor will chide his beloved pupil for ever having allowed so foolish a love to enter his heart, then——"

"I am a pupil no longer," interrupted he with glowing cheek. "I am seventeen years old, and no tutor has any more power over me."

She seemed not to have heard him, and continued in her sweet, melancholy voice: "To-morrow, when perhaps another messenger comes to summon you home, when he brings you a letter from your father with the command to set forth immediately, in which you are informed that he has selected a bride for you, oh, then will the Electoral Prince Frederick William be naught but the obedient son, who obeys his father's commands, who leaves this country to seek his native land, and to wed the bride who has been chosen for him by his father."

"No!" shouted the Electoral Prince fiercely, while he leaped up from the divan, and stamped his foot upon the ground—"I say no, and once more no. I shall not do what they order. I shall only follow my own will. And it is my will, my fixed, unalterable will, to make you my wife, and this will I shall carry into effect, despite my father, the German Emperor, and the whole world. Ludovicka, I here offer you my hand. Do you accept it? Will you be my wife?"

With a countenance irradiated by energy, pride, and love he held out his hand to her, and smilingly she laid her own small hand in his.

"Yes," she said, "I will be your wife. With pride and joy I accept your beloved hand, and swear that I love you, and will honor and obey you as my lord and my beloved!"

He sank upon his knees before her, and kissed the hand which rested in his own. "Ludovicka Hollandine, Princess

of the Palatinate," he said, with distinct and solemn voice, "I, Frederick William, Electoral Prince of Brandenburg, vow and swear hereby to love and be faithful to you ever as your wedded husband."

"I accept your oath, and return it!" she cried joyfully. "I, too, swear to love and be ever true to you, and to take you for my husband. And here you have my betrothal kiss, and here you have your destined bride. Take her, and love her a little, for she loves you very much, and she will die of chagrin if you forget her!"

"I shall never forget you, Ludovicka!" cried he, tenderly embracing her. "Storms indeed will come, violent tempests will rage about us, but I rejoice in them. For strength is tried by storms, and when it thunders and lightens I can then prove to you that my arm is strong enough to protect you, and that you are safe from all danger upon my heart."

"O Frederick! and still, still would they separate us. My mother just said to me yesterday, 'Take care not to love the Electoral Prince seriously, for he can never be your husband.' And when, trembling and weeping, I asked the reason, she at last replied, 'Because you are a poor Princess, and because the misfortunes of your house overshadow you likewise.' The Elector and his minister will never give their consent to such a union, and the Electoral Prince will never have the spirit to be disobedient to his father and to marry in opposition to his wishes."

She darted a quick, searching glance at his face, and saw how he reddened with indignation. "I shall prove to your mother that she is mistaken in me," he said vehemently. "I am indeed yet young in years, but I feel myself in heart a man who bows to no strange will, and is only obedient to the law of his conscience and his own judgment. I love you, Ludovicka, and I will marry you!"

"If they give us time, Frederick," sighed Ludovicka. "If they do not force me first to wed some other man."

"What do you say?" cried the Electoral Prince, growing pale, as he clasped his beloved yet closer to his side. "Could it be possible that——"

"That they sell and barter me away, just as they do other

princesses? Yes, alas! it is possible. Ay, Frederick, more than possible—it is certain that they have such views. Wherefore think you, then, that the Electoral Prince of Hesse is here—that he came yesterday with my uncle, the Stadtholder, to visit my mother, and that he was even presented to me in my own apartment? O Frederick! my mother has told me it is a settled thing—that the Electoral Prince of Hesse has come to marry me. They have already made arrangements, and got everything in readiness. Day after to-morow is to be the day for his formal wooing, and if you do not save me, if you know of no way of escape, then in eight days I shall be the bride of the Electoral Prince of Hesse. I had planned, Frederick, to try you first—to hear from yourself whether you actually loved me, whether your love was earnest. Had I discovered that you were only making sport of my heart, had you not formally offered me your hand and sued for me as your wife, then would I have gone silently away, would have buried my love in the depths of my soul, sacrificed myself to my mother's wishes and the misfortune of my house, and become the wife of the Electoral Prince of Hesse. But you do love me, you offer me your hand, and now I confess my love openly and joyfully—now I cast myself in your arms and entreat you: Save me, my Frederick, do not let them tear me away from you! Save me from the Electoral Prince of Hesse!"

She flung both her arms around him, pressed him closely to her, and looked up to him with tenderly beseeching eye. With passionate warmth the Electoral Prince kissed those alluring eyes and lips responding to his pressure. "You shall be mine, you must be mine, for I love you inexpressibly. I can not, I will not live without you!"

"Let us fly, my beloved," whispered she, always holding him in her embrace. "Let us fly before the wrath of your father, before the courtship of the Electoral Prince of Hesse. Let us preserve our love in some quiet corner of the earth; let us fly where no one can follow us, where your father's will and his minister's hate can have no power—let us fly!"

"Yes," said he, clasping closer in his arms the tender,

glowing creature who clung so affectionately to him—"yes, let us fly, my beloved. They shall not tear you from me; I will have you, in spite of them all—you shall be mine, even though the whole world should rise up in opposition. To-morrow night let us make our escape. You are right; there must be some quiet corner of the world where we can hide ourselves, living for happiness, for love alone, until it is permitted us to emerge from our seclusion, and assume the station in the world due to us both. Yes, we will flee, Ludovicka, we will flee, no matter where!"

"Oh, I hope I know a place of refuge, where we may be sheltered from the first wrath of our relatives, my Frederick. I have friends, influential, mighty friends, who will gladly furnish us with an asylum, and from whom we may accept it. To them I shall turn—to them apply for a retreat. They will provide us with the means for flight. Only, my beloved," she continued, hesitating and with downcast eyes, "only one thing is needful to enable me to flee with you."

"What is that, my beloved, tell me?"

"Frederick, I can only follow my husband, only go with you as your wife."

"Yes, you sweet, lovely girl, you can only follow me as your husband. To-morrow night we make our escape, and ere we escape we must be married, and a priest shall bless our love. You say you have influential and powerful friends here, and indeed I know that the richest, noblest men in Holland vie with one another for one kind glance from my Ludovicka. Oh, not in vain have the States stood godfather for my bride, and given her their name. Now will some rich, powerful citizen of Holland prove that he, too, is godfather to the lovely Princess Hollandine, and in Java or Peru, or perhaps on some ship, find us a republic. I accept it, beloved, I accept it, and swear beforehand that the future Elector shall reward the rich mynheer and the whole of Holland for the good now done to the Electoral Prince and his beloved Hollandine. Speak, therefore, to your good, rich friends; tell them they may help and assist us. I agree to everything, I accept everything. I only want you, you yourself, for you are my all, my life, my light!"

"You give me full power, then, to make arrangements for our flight, my Frederick?"

"I give you full power, my beloved; you are wiser, more thoughtful than I am; besides, you are not so strictly guarded, so encircled by spies as I am."

"No; to-morrow I am still free," exulted she—"to-morrow the Electoral Prince of Hesse has as yet no power over me, and no one will be observing me. My mother has been detained by sickness at The Hague, and here at Doornward there are no spies. Yes, I take charge of all, beloved. I shall manage everything, and to-morrow night I shall expect you."

"To-morrow night I shall come here to take you away, my beloved."

"No, not here, for to-morrow my mother comes home, and then the castle will no longer be so solitary and quiet; then there will be many people here, and our movements might be watched."

"Well, where else shall I find you, Ludovicka?"

She clung to him, and gazed tenderly into his glowing eyes. "Oh," she said, "you do not know what I have ventured and dared for you. Do you remember with what animation and rapture you spoke to me recently of the secret league which exists at The Hague, of the rare feasts which you solemnize there, of the pleasure and delight you experience there? Do you remember how you lamented that we could not enjoy this glorious companionship together, that I could not be there at your side? Well, see, beloved, now you must admit how much I love you, and how ready I am to please you. I have in perfect secrecy and silence had myself initiated into the order of the Media Nocte."

"You have done that?" cried the Prince, in joyful astonishment. "You belong to this glorious company of great minds, flaming hearts, and noble souls? Oh, my Ludovicka, I recognize your love in this, and I thank you, and am proud of it that my betrothed belongs to the genial, the intellectual, and the elect. Oh, you are not merely my destined bride, you are my muse, my goddess, and in humility I bow my head before you, and I kiss the hem of your robe, beloved mistress, chosen one!"

He bent his knee and kissed her robe, and bowed lower to kiss the tiny foot in its blue satin shoe. Then he raised one of these pretty feet and kissed it again, and placed it on his breast, holding it fast there with both his hands.

"Mistress," he whispered, lifting up to her his countenance, beaming with love and enthusiasm—"mistress, your slave lies before you. Crush me, let me be dust beneath your feet, if you do not love me; let me die here, or swear to me that you will ever love me, that to-morrow night you will link your destiny indissolubly with mine!"

"I will ever love you," she breathed forth, with a magical smile; "to-morrow night I will link my fate to yours."

"Give me a pledge of your vow, a sign, a token of this hour!" entreated he, still holding the little foot between his hands.

"What sort of pledge do you require, beloved of my heart? Ask, command; whatever it may be, it shall be yours!"

With beaming, happy look he gazed upon her glowing countenance, and nodded to her, and whispered words full of tenderness and love, and at the same time with fondling hand loosened the silver buckle which fastened the blue satin shoe upon her foot, drew off the slipper from her little foot, whose rosy hue was transparent through the white silk stocking, and smilingly thrust it into the breast pocket of his velvet jacket.

"But, Frederick, my shoe—give me back my shoe," said she, laughing; and her little hand and wondrous arm dived into his pocket to recover the stolen shoe. But the Prince held fast the little hand, whose warm, soft touch he felt to the deepest recesses of his heart, and pressed warm, glowing kisses on that ravishing arm, which seemed to quiver and tremble at the touch of his lips.

"My shoe," she breathed softly—"give me my shoe!"

"Never!" said he energetically. "No, I swear it, so truly as I love you, I shall never give back to you this precious jewel. Mine it remains, and not for all the treasures of the earth do I give it back again. Here, on my heart, it shall rest, the charming little shoe, and when I die it shall rest beside me in my coffin."

"No, no, I will have it again!" cried Ludovicka. "My heavens! what would my chambermaid say, if to-morrow morning one of my shoes had vanished—been spirited away?"

"Let her say and think what she pleases, dearest. Tell her you will direct her where to find it on the day after to-morrow. Think you not that when our flight is discovered, she will readily guess who has stolen your shoe?"

"But see, Frederick, see my poor foot; it is freezing, pining for its house!"

And smilingly Ludovicka extended toward the Prince her shoeless little foot. He took it between his hands and breathed on it with his glowing breath, and pressed upon it his burning lips.

"Forgive me, you beautiful foot, for having robbed you of your house. But look you, dear foot, the little house shall now become a sacred memento of my love and my betrothal; and look you, dear foot, I swear to you that you shall walk in pleasant paths. I shall strew flowers for you, you shall tread upon roses, and not a thorn shall prick you and not a stone bruise you. That I swear to you, you little foot of the great enchantress, and therefore forgive me my theft!"

"It shook its head, it will not!" cried Ludovicka, swinging her foot to and fro.

"It shall forgive, or I will punish its mistress!" cried the Prince, while he sprang up, ardently encircling his beloved with his arm. "Yes, you shall pay me for your cruel foot, and——"

All at once he became silent, and, hearkening, looked toward the wall. Ludovicka shrank back, and turned her eye to the same spot.

"Is there a door there?" whispered he.

"Yes," she breathed softly, "a tapestry door leading to the small corridor, and thence into my sleeping apartment."

"Is any one in your sleeping room?"

"My little cousin, Louisa of Orange, who came to-day, and insisted upon staying here—— Hush, for God's sake! she is coming. Hide yourself!"

He flew across the room and jumped behind the door curtain, through which d'Entragues had gone out a little

while before. The curtain yet shook from the violence of his movement, when the little tapestry door on the other side was opened, and a lovely child appeared upon the threshold. A long white nightgown, trimmed with rose-colored favors, concealed the slender delicate form in its flowing drapery, falling from the neck to the feet, which, perfectly bare, peeped forth from beneath the white wrapper like two little rose-buds. Her fair hair was parted over the broad, open brow, and fell in long, heavy ringlets on each side of the lovely childish face. The big blue eyes looked so pious and innocent, and such a soft, gentle smile played about the fresh crimson lips! In this whole fair apparition there was such a wondrous magic, so superhuman a loveliness, that it might have been supposed that an angel from heaven had descended and was now entering this apartment, which was yet aglow with the sighs and protestations of passionate earthly love, and radiant as a consecrated altar taper shone the candle in the silver candlestick which she carried in her hand. Lightly and inaudibly the child tripped across the floor to the Princess, who had thrown herself upon the divan, and assumed the appearance of just being aroused from a deep slumber.

"Forgive me, dear, beautiful Aunt Ludovicka," said the little girl, in a low, soft voice, while she placed the candle upon the table and leaned over the Princess—"forgive me for waking you up. But I had such a fearful dream, and I fancied it was real. It seemed to me as if robbers were in the castle. I heard them laugh and talk quite plainly, and I was dreadfully distressed, and called you. You did not answer me, and then I thought they had already murdered you, and I sprang from the sofa where they had prepared my couch, near to your bed. You were not there, your bed was cold and empty, and still I heard quite plainly the loud laughing and talking of the robbers, and I was so dreadfully anxious and distressed that I must see where you were—I must see if they had not murdered you. I took the light and came here running, and, God be thanked! here is my dear Aunt Hollandine, and no robbers have taken her away from me, and no murderers have killed her."

With her slender childish arms she embraced the Princess,

and pressed her rosy cheeks tenderly against Ludovicka's glowing face.

"You little blockhead, how you have frightened me!" said Ludovicka, repulsing her almost rudely. "I was asleep here, dreaming such sweet dreams, and all at once you have come and waked me, you little night owl. Go, go to bed, Louisa, and do not be so timid, child. No robbers and murderers come here, and in our castle you need not be afraid."

"Ah, Aunt Hollandine," whispered the child, while she cast a frightened, anxious glance around the room—"ah, Aunt Hollandine, I am afraid that this castle is haunted. It was either robbers or evil spirits who made such a noise and talked and laughed so loud. And"—she stooped lower and quite softly whispered—"and you may believe me, dear, good aunt, it is haunted here. I plainly saw the curtain across there shake as I entered. Evil spirits are abroad to-night. Do you hear how it howls and whistles out of doors, and how the windows rattle? Those are spirits, and they have flown in here and laughed and danced. O aunt! you did not hear, but I did, for I have been awake, and have heard and seen how the door curtain shook, and there they lurk now, those wicked spirits, and look at us and laugh. Oh, I know that, I do! My nurse, Trude, told me all about it the other evening, and she knows. There are good and bad spirits; but the good spirits make no noise, and you would not know they were here. They come to you so quietly and so gently, and sit by your bed and look at you, and their faces shine like the moon and their eyes like stars, and their thoughts are prayers and their smiles God's blessing. But evil spirits are noisy and boisterous, and laugh and make an uproar as they did to-night!"

"You have been dreaming, little simpleton, and fancy now that you really heard what dull sleep alone was thrumming about your ears. All has been quiet and peaceful here, and no evil spirits were in this room—trust me."

"Neither were good spirits here, aunt!" cried the child; with tearful voice. "The door curtain did move, and I did hear laughter—believe me. And, dear Aunt Hollandine, I beg you to give me your hand and come with me into your

sleeping room, and please be kind enough to your poor little Louisa to take her with you into your great fine bed, and let us hug one another and pray together and sleep together; then the evil spirits can not get to us. Come, dear aunt, come!"

With both her hands she seized the Princess by the arm, and tried to lift her from the divan. But Ludovicka hastily pushed her away.

"Leave such follies, Louisa, and go to bed!" she said angrily. "Had I known what a restless sleeper you were, I should not have gratified your wish of staying with me, but had you put to bed on the other side of the castle with the little princesses, my sisters."

"Aunt," said the child, in a touching tone of voice, "I will be perfectly still and quiet, I shall certainly not disturb you, if you will only be good and kind enough to come with me."

"No," said Ludovicka, "no, I am not going with you, for I have something still to do here. But if you are good and docile, and go back quietly and prettily to the sleeping room, and creep into your little bed, then I promise you to come soon."

"Well, then, I will go," sighed the child, and dropped her little head like a withered flower. "Yes, I will be good, that you may love me. But please come soon, Aunt Ludovicka, come soon."

She again took the candlestick from the table, nodded to the Princess and tried to smile, while at the same time two long-restrained tears rolled, like liquid pearls, from her large blue eyes over her rosy cheeks. Softly and with her little head always bowed down she crossed the apartment to the tapestry door; but, just as she was on the verge of the threshold, she stopped, turned around, and an expression of radiant joy flashed across her pretty face.

"Dear aunt," she cried, "Trude told me that when we pray evil spirits must fly away, and have no longer any power. I will pray, yes, I will pray for you."

And the child sank upon her knees. Placing the candlestick at her side, she folded her little white hands upon her breast, raised her head and eyes, and prayed in a distinct,

earnest voice: "Dear Heavenly Father and all ye holy angels on high, protect the innocent and the good! O God! guide us to thee with the golden star which shone upon the shepherds in the field when they went out to seek the child Christ! Blessed angels, come down and keep guard around our bed, that no evil spirits and bad dreams can come to trouble us! God and all ye holy angels on high, have pity on the innocent and good! Amen! Amen! Amen!"

And at the last amen, the child rose from her knees, again took up her light, and tripped lightly and smiling out of the room.

Ludovicka sprang to the door, shut it close, and leaned against it. The Electoral Prince stepped forth from the curtain on the other side, and his countenance was grave, and his large eyes were less fiery and passionate, as he now approached the Princess.

"Poor child," he whispered, "how bitterly distressed she is! Go to her, my precious love, and pray with her for our happiness and our love."

"Are you going away already, my Frederick?" she asked tenderly.

He pointed with his finger to the tapestry door. "She is so distressed, and her dear little face was so sad, it touched me to the heart."

"How foolish I was," she murmured impatiently—"how foolish not to think of it, that the child might disturb us! She has often before spent the night with me, and never waked up, never——"

"Never has she been disturbed," concluded the Prince, smiling. "Never before have evil spirits chattered and laughed within your room, and roused her from her sleep. But she shall yet see that her prayer has not been in vain, but that it has exorcised the evil spirits. Farewell, dear one! Farewell, and this kiss for good-night—this kiss for my beloved promised bride! The last betrothal kiss, for to-morrow night you will be my wife! God and all ye holy angels on high, protect the innocent and good!"

He kissed once more her lips and her dark, perfumed hair, then hastened with rapid step across the apartment, hurriedly

opened the window, lowered the rope ladder, and swung himself up on the windowsill."

"Farewell, dearest, farewell! To-morrow night we shall meet again!" he whispered, kissing the tips of his fingers to her. Then he seized the rope ladder with both hands, and ere the Princess, who had hastened toward him, had yet found time to assist him and offer her hand to aid him in descending, his slight, elastic figure had disappeared beneath the dark window frame.

Ludovicka leaned out of the window, and with all the strength of her delicate little hands held firm the rope ladder, which swayed backward and forward and sighed and groaned beneath its burden. All at once the rope ladder stood still, and like spirit greetings were wafted up to her the words, "Farewell! farewell!"

"He is gone," murmured Ludovicka, retreating from the window—"he is gone! But to-morrow, to-morrow night, I shall have him again. To-morrow night I shall be his wife. O Sir Count d'Entragues! you shall be forced to acknowledge that the Electoral Prince loves me, and that his declaration of love is synonymous with an offer of marriage! I think I have managed everything exactly as it was marked out on the paper. Let us look again."

She again drew forth the paper from the casket on her writing table, and read it through attentively. "Yes," she murmured as she read, "all in order. Offer of marriage elicited. Alarmed by the threat that they will unite me to the Prince of Hesse. Not betray who the friends are who will render me their aid. Secret marriage arranged. Time presses. To-morrow night. All is in order. The Media Nocte, too, confessed. Only one thing is still wanting. I only omitted telling him that our rendezvous must be in the Media Nocte, and that we make our escape from there. Well, never mind, I can tell him to-morrow, and about ten o'clock the orange-colored ribbon may flutter from my window, and Count d'Entragues will be so rejoiced! Oh, to-morrow, to-morrow I shall be my handsome Electoral Prince's wife!"

She stretched forth her arms, as if she would embrace, although he was invisible, the handsome, beloved youth, whose

kisses yet burned upon her lips. Her flaming eyes wandered over the apartment, as if she still hoped to find there his fine and slender shape. Now, not finding him, she sighed heavily and fixed her eyes upon the great portrait, which hung upon the wall above the divan. It was the half-length likeness of a woman, a queen, as was shown by the diadem of pearls surmounting her high, narrow forehead, and behind which a crown could be discerned. A rare picture it was, possessed of magical attractions. The large blue eyes, so glowing and tender, the soft, rounded cheeks, so transparently fair, the full, pouting lips, so speaking—all seemed to promise joy; and yet in the whole expression of the face there was so much melancholy and so much pain! Princess Ludovicka walked softly to the portrait, and lifted up to it her folded hands. "I, too, will pray," she whispered. "Yes, I will pray to you, Mary Stuart, queen of love and beauty! O Mary! holy martyr, graciously incline thy glance toward thy grandchild. Let thy starry eyes rest upon me, and graciously protect me in the path that I shall tread to-morrow, for it is the path of love! Oh, let it be the path of happiness as well! Mary Stuart, pray for me, and protect me, your grandchild! Amen!"

III.—The Warning.

"Your highness stayed out very late again last night," said Herr Kalkhun von Leuchtmar, as he entered the sleeping apartment of the Electoral Prince Frederick William, who was still in bed.

"Yes, it is true," replied the Prince, stretching himself at his ease, "I did come home very late last night."

"The chamberlain has already waked your highness three times, and your highness has each time assured him that he would get up, but has each time, it seems, fallen asleep again."

"Yes, I did fall asleep each time," answered Frederick William, in a somewhat irritated tone of voice; "and what of it?"

"Why," said Herr von Leuchtmar pleasantly—"why, the painter Gabriel Nietzel, who arrived yesterday, and to whom your highness promised to give audience this morning at eight o'clock, has been waiting almost two hours; Count von Berg, on whom your highness was to call at nine o'clock, has been expecting you an hour in vain—the horse has stood saddled in the stable for an hour; and the private secretary Müller, with whom your highness was to prepare to-day a treatise upon fortifications, will probably make no progress whatever with the work."

"It seems that I am not to have the privilege of sleeping as long as I choose," cried the Electoral Prince, with a mocking laugh. "My house moves like clockwork, in which there is no comfort or rest whatever, but where each must perform his prescribed service with mathematical exactness, that the whole be not stopped."

"It is in a house as in a state," said Leuchtmar seriously: "each one, high and low, must do his duty, else the whole machinery stops, and, as your highness very justly remarked, the clockwork either stands still or is at the least put out of order."

"Consequently, the clockwork of my house was disarranged merely because I stayed up two hours later than I have been accustomed to do?"

"Totally disarranged, your highness."

The Prince reddened with displeasure, his eyes flashed, and he had already opened his mouth for an angry reply, when he violently restrained himself.

"I will get up," he said, "and then we can talk more about it."

Herr von Leuchtmar bowed and withdrew to the antechamber. A quarter of an hour, however, had hardly elapsed before the chamberlain issued from the Prince's sleeping apartment, and announced to Herr Kalkhun von Leuchtmar, that breakfast was served, and that his highness, the Electoral Prince, awaited the baron's attendance at this meal in his drawing room. Herr von Leuchtmar hastened to obey the summons, and to repair to the Prince's drawing room. Frederick William seemed not at all conscious of his entrance.

He sat on the divan sipping his chocolate, and at the same time restlessly playing with the greyhound that lay at his feet, looking up at him with its gentle, truthful eyes. Herr von Leuchtmar seated himself opposite the Prince, and took his breakfast in silent reserve. Once the Prince's eye scanned the noble, serious countenance of his former tutor, and the expression of perfect repose resting there seemed to pique and irritate him. He jumped up and several times walked briskly up and down the room. Then he paused before Leuchtmar, who had likewise risen, and whose large, dark-blue eyes were turned upon the Prince in gentle sorrow.

"Leuchtmar," said the latter, shortly and quickly, "all is not between us as it should be."

"I have remarked it for some time with pain," replied the baron softly. "Your highness is out of humor."

"No, I am discontented!" cried the Prince; "and, by heavens, I have a right to be!"

"Will your highness have the kindness to tell me why you are discontented?"

"Yes, I will tell you, for you must know it in order that you may endeavor to alter it. I am discontented, Leuchtmar, because you and Müller will never forget that I have owed respect to you as my teachers."

"Prince," said the baron, lifting his head a little higher—"Prince, have we two behaved ourselves so as no longer to deserve your respect?"

"Respect, indeed; but you confound respect with obedience, and wish me to obey you unreservedly, as if I were still a boy, subject to his teachers."

"While now you would say you are a Prince arrived at years of majority, who no longer needs a teacher, and whose earlier preceptors are now only his subjects, dependent upon him."

"No, I would not say that; and it is exceedingly obliging in you to carry your guardianship so far as even to interpret what I would say. Meanwhile, you have made a remark which claims my attention. You said that I was a Prince in my majority?"

"Certainly, your highness, you are a major in so far as

the laws of the electoral house of Brandenburg allow the Electoral Prince, in case of his father's death, if he has attained his sixteenth year, to assume the reins of government, independent of governor or regent."

"Consequently, if my father were to die (which God forbid !) I might administer the government independently, in my own right ?"

"Independently and in your own right, your highness."

"Whence comes it then that I, who might undertake the government of a whole country, am yet perpetually under restraint in the conduct of my own private life, watched over and treated like an irresponsible boy? It grieves me, Herr von Leuchtmar, to be forced to remind you that the time for my education is past, for I am not sixteen years old, but already several weeks advanced in my eighteenth year."

"I thank your highness for this admonition," replied the baron quietly, "and I confess that without it I should not have known that your education was finished."

"Sir, you insult me ! So you still regard me as nothing but a boy ?"

"No, your highness, as a man, and I believe that Socrates was right when he said, 'The education of man begins in the cradle and ends only in the grave.'"

"You know very well that he meant it in a widely different sense. Our talk is not now of actual education, but of the relations of pupil and teacher. The time of my pupilage is past, Sir Baron, and you will bear in mind, I beg, that I no longer sit in the schoolroom."

"That, again, I did not know," said Leuchtmar gently, "and again in my defense I cite the wise Socrates, who said, 'Man is learning his whole life long, to confess at last that the only certain knowledge he has attained is that he knows nothing.'"

"Maxims and maxims forever !" cried the Prince impatiently. "You want to evade me—you purposely misunderstand me. Well, then, candidly speaking, I am sick and tired of being everlastingly found fault with, watched over, tutored and spied upon, and once for all I beg that a stop be put to all this."

"Will your highness do me the favor to say who it is that finds fault with, watches over, tutors, and spies upon you?"

"Why, yes—you, Baron Kalkhun von Leuchtmar, you and the private secretary Müller, you two first and foremost do those very things."

"Your highness, if we have allowed ourselves to find fault with you when you did not deserve it, it was very presumptuous; if we have watched over you and tutored you, surely that might be forgiven in former tutors and instructors; but if we have acted as spies upon you, then have we both degraded ourselves and become contemptible, and your highness may esteem it as my last tutoring if I advise you to remove so unworthy a couple of subjects forever from your presence."

"You will lead me *ad absurdum*, Leuchtmar!" cried the Prince. "You would prove to me that I am wrong and accuse you falsely. But you are mistaken, sir; I only speak the truth. One thing I ask you, though: have you ever looked upon me as an ungrateful pupil, a disobedient scholar, an ill-natured, idle man?"

"No, never," returned Leuchtmar cordially. "No, your highness——"

"Leave off those tiresome titles," interrupted the Prince. "Speak simply and to the point, without ceremony, as is becoming in serious moments, when man stands face to face with man."

"Well then, no. You have ever been only a source of delight to your teachers and preceptors, and have ever proved yourself a kind-hearted, friendly, and condescending young Prince. You have (forgive me for saying so) been indeed the model of a young, amiable, good, and intellectual Prince. You have completed your studies at the universities of Arnheim and Leyden to the highest satisfaction of your professors. You have distinguished yourself at the colleges by diligence and attention, and perfected yourself in the languages and mastered all the sciences. Since you have been here at The Hague you have won for yourself the love and admiration of all those who have had the good fortune to come into your presence——"

"Leuchtmar," interrupted the Prince, with difficulty sup-

pressing a smile—"Leuchtmar, now you are falling into the opposite error; before you blamed me too much, now you praise me too much!"

"Prince, I spoke before as now, only according to my inmost convictions, and you permit me still to utter these, do you not?"

"Well," said Frederick William, hesitating, "the thing is—if your convictions are too flattering or too injurious, you might moderate them a little. For example, the way you acted in my sleeping room, a little while ago, was injurious. Just acknowledge it—say that you went a little too far, that it was not becoming in you to find fault with me, because I sat up a few hours too late, and all is made up."

"Prince," replied Leuchtmar, after a slight pause—"Prince, forgive me, but I can not say it, for it would be an untruth. For a Prince, want of punctuality is a very dangerous and bad fault, and if he first becomes unreliable in his outer being, he will be so soon in his inner nature as well. But I do admit that perhaps I spoke in too excited a tone of voice, and the reason of that was, because——"

"Well? Be pleased to finish your sentence. Because——"

"Because, yes, let it be spoken plainly, because I know what this keeping of late hours means."

"And what does it mean, if I may ask?"

"Prince, my dear, beloved Prince, you whom in the depths of my soul I call my son, Prince, forgive me if I answer. It means that you have fallen into bad company—company which it is beneath your dignity to keep, company alike prejudicial to your mind and honor as to your health."

"Of what company do you dare to speak so?" asked the Prince, with wrathful voice.

"Prince, of that company which is hypocritical and deceitful as sin, dazzling and alluring as a poisonous flower, dangerous and deadly as Scylla and Charybdis, of the company of the Media Nocte."

The Prince laughed aloud, and at the same time drew a deep breath, as if he felt his breast relieved of an oppressive burden. "Ah," he said, "is it only this? The Media Nocte is indeed a society which appears to all those who do not

belong to it as a monster, a dragon, which slays with its fiery breath those who approach it, and daily requires for its breakfast a youth or a maiden. But I tell you, you anxious and short-sighted fools, you take an eagle for a flying dragon, and scream fire merely because you see a bright light! The Media Nocte is no monster, no Scylla and Charybdis, and we need not on her account have our arms bound, as cunning Ulysses did, which, by the way, always seemed to me very weak and womanly. A man must go to meet danger with a bold eye, with valiant spirit; he must confront it with his freedom of will and strength, and not seek to defend himself from it by outward means of resistance. Supposing that the Media Nocte were the dangerous society which you erroneously imagine it to be, need this be a ground for me to intrench myself timidly against it and flee its touch? No; just for that very reason would I seek it out—advance to meet it with the determination to do battle with it. But I tell you that you are mistaken in your premises! The Media Nocte is a society devoted to noble pleasures, to pure joys, to the highest, most intellectual enjoyments. All the arts, all the sciences, are fostered by it. All that is great and good, exalted and beautiful, is hailed there with delight, and only pedantry and stupidity are held aloof. Truth and nature are the two sacred laws observed in this society, and the noble, pure, free, and chaste Grecian spirit is the great exemplar of all its members. Therefore they all appear in Greek robes, and all their banquets are solemnized in the Greek style. And this it is which you wise, pedantic people stigmatize as blameworthy and abominable. The unusual fills you with horror, and the genial you call bold because it soars above what is commonplace!"

"Well do I know that your highness looks upon the society in this way," replied Leuchtmar, regarding with loving glances the handsome, excited countenance of the Prince. "Yes, I know that this is the only view you have had of the society of the Media Nocte, and that you would turn from it with horror and disgust if you were conscious of the license lurking behind its apparent geniality, the coarseness behind the unusual. But I beseech you, Prince, be not blind with your eyes open, close not voluntarily the avenues to light.

I swear to you as an honest and a truthful man, that this society is like a plague spot for the noble youth of The Hague. Each one who touches it becomes impregnated with its poison, and sickens in spirit and imagination, and the fearful poison flows into his mind and heart, driving out from them forever truth and freshness, youth and innocence! Had I a son who belonged to this society with full understanding and appreciation of its meaning, I should mourn and lament him as one lost; had I a daughter, and had she even once voluntarily attended a meeting of the Media Nocte and participated in its pleasures, then should I thrust her from me with aversion and disgust—should no longer recognize her as my daughter, but forever expel her from my house in shame and disgust, for——"

"Desist!" cried the Prince, with thundering voice, springing toward Leuchtmar and grasping his shoulders with both hands. Glaring fiercely upon him, he repeated, "Desist, I tell you, Leuchtmar, desist, and recall what you have just said, for it is a libel, a slander!"

"No, it is the truth, Prince!" cried Leuchtmar, emphatically. "The Media Nocte is a society of the honorless and shameless, and the woman who belongs to it is no longer pure!"

"No further, man, or I shall kill you!" said the Prince, in a high-pitched voice stifled by rage, while his arms clutched Leuchtmar's shoulders yet more firmly. "Only hear this: You know and have long guessed that I love the Princess Ludovicka Hollandine. Well, now, the Princess Ludovicka Hollandine belongs to the society of the Media Nocte!"

"I knew that, Prince," said Leuchtmar solemnly.

The Prince gave a scream of rage, and a deadly pallor overspread his cheeks. He still retained his grasp upon Leuchtmar's shoulders, his flashing eyes penetrated like dagger points Leuchtmar's countenance, and on his brow stood great drops of sweat, which gave witness of his inward tortures.

"You knew that," he said, with gasping breath and gnashing teeth—"you knew that, and yet you dare to speak so, dare to vilify the maiden whom I love, dare to asperse a pure

angel, to call her an outcast! Take back your words, man, if your life is dear to you—recall them, if you would leave this room alive!"

"Kill me, Prince, for I do not recall them!" cried Leuchtmar, tranquilly meeting the flaming glances of the Prince. "No, I do not recall them, and if you take away my life, I shall give it up in your service and for your profit. You see very well I attempt no defense, although I am a strong man, who knows well how to defend his life. But for my own convictions and for you I die gladly. Kill me then!"

"You do not recall them?" shrieked the Prince. "You maintain all to be truth that you have said of the order of the Media Nocte? You knew already before I told you that the Princess Ludovicka Hollandine belongs to it?"

"I knew it, Prince, indeed, I knew it!"

The Prince burst into a wild laugh, and with a sudden jerk thrust Leuchtmar so violently from him that he reeled backward against the wall.

"No," he said grimly and wrathfully—"no, I will not do you the pleasure to kill you, for that would turn a wretched farce into a tragedy, and make a hero of a comedian! You are a good comedian, and you have played your part well! I can testify to that. Go and claim credit for this with my father and Count Schwarzenberg!"

"I do not understand you, Prince. What does this mean?"

"It means, Mr. Comedian, it means, that already this morning, while you supposed I was sleeping, I have had an interview with Gabriel Nietzel, my mother's court painter. Ah! now start back and be amazed. Yes, Gabriel Nietzel sat by my bed for more than an hour, and brought me a verbal message from my mother. She had also intrusted him with a letter for me, but on his journey here he has been robbed and the letter taken from him. Oh, I imagine the robbers took much more interest in the letters than in the effects of the painter, and Count Schwarzenberg and yourself both well know their contents. But happily my mother gave good Gabriel Nietzel a message to bring by word of mouth as well, which they could not steal from him, Baron von Leuchtmar.

Can you understand now why I call you a comedian, who has studied his part well ?"

"No, Electoral Prince of Brandenburg, I can not yet."

"Well, sir, then I shall tell you. Your virtuous indignation against the Media Nocte, your shameful allegations against a Princess, whom I love, your injurious accusations and slanders—all that was nothing more than a well-studied rôle prepared for you by my father and his minister. Oh, answer me not, do not deny it. I know what I say. Yes, I know that the Emperor of Germany deigns to interest himself in the marriage of the little Electoral Prince of Brandenburg. I know that his condescension goes so far as to desire to bless me with the hand of an Austrian archduchess. I know that on this account he has given strict orders and injunctions to his devoted servant, who is my father's all-powerful minister, that I shall be summoned away from The Hague ; not, indeed, to reside at my father's court, but to proceed to the imperial court. But, God be thanked, the walls of the palace of Berlin are not o'er thick, and my mother has quick ears and Gabriel Nietzel is a trusty messenger. Yes, sir, I know you and your plans. I know, too, that the Emperor dreads my union with the Princess Ludovicka ; that he has had my father notified that he will never sanction such a union, and that therefore my father and his Catholic minister have dispatched hither messengers and envoys, with strict orders never to suffer a matrimonial alliance with the Princess Ludovicka Hollandine, but to do everything to prevent it. Everything to prevent it ! Do you understand me, sir ? To calumniate also, and accuse and defame. But all together you shall not succeed. I shall prove to the Emperor, the Elector and his minister that I do not fear their wrath, and that the Electoral Prince of Brandenburg will never, never be the vassal and servant of the German Emperor ; that he feels himself to be an independent man, who claims for himself freedom of will and action, and who will only wed in obedience to the dictates of his own heart and his own will. But you, Leuchtmar, I herewith bid you farewell ! We part to-day, and forever. That we so part, believe me, is to me a lifelong pain, for never can I forget what I owe you, and how faithful you have otherwise

been to me. Leuchtmar, it is dreadful that you have turned against me. Go, we have parted! Go! And when you get home to Berlin, then say to my father's Austrian minister, that I shall never forgive him for what he has this day done to me, and that the Elector Frederick William will avenge the Electoral Prince. Tell him that I shall never accept an Austrian archduchess, a Catholic, as my wife—never become the humble slave of the Emperor of Germany. This is my farewell!"

And with flaming countenance and eyes flashing with energy and passion, the Prince crossed the apartment, violently pulled open the door, and strode out. Leuchtmar looked after him with a mixture of tenderness and grief. "How angry he was, and yet how glorious to look upon!" he said softly to himself. "A young hero, who one day will perform his vow. He will not bow down as the vassal of the German Emperor!"

A side door was just now easily and cautiously opened, and an older man of venerable aspect, in simple court garb, timidly entered, looking carefully around, as if he dreaded finding some one else in the apartment.

"Baron, for heaven's sake, what has happened here?" he asked anxiously. "The Electoral Prince has been talking so loudly and so angrily that they heard him all through the house, and now he has stormed out and shouted to have his horse saddled. Almighty God! what has happened?"

Baron Leuchtmar laid his hand upon his friend's arm, and nodded kindly to him. "My dear Müller," he said, with a faint smile, "nothing more has happened than that the Electoral Prince has just dismissed me in anger, and sent me home to Berlin."

"For pity's sake, what is that you say?" asked the private secretary, clasping his trembling hands together in painful astonishment. "He has been so ungrateful as to thrust from him his best and truest friend?"

"I tell you yes, my dear Müller, he has done so, and in wrath. You know well that hastiness of temper is an heirloom of the Brandenburg princes, and Frederick William can not deny that he has the family failing. Yes, he has dis-

missed me ; but then, you know, it was perfectly natural, for he loves the Princess Ludovicka Hollandine, and I ventured to criticise her."

"It is actually true, then, that he loves her? He has allowed himself to be enticed by the siren ! Ah ! she is the genuine grandchild of Mary Stuart, and knows how to charm."

"Hush, Müller, hush ! If the Electoral Prince hears that, he will send you to the devil too ! "

"He may do so," cried the old gentleman indignantly. "If he drives you away, his tutor and his best friend, then I shall reckon it an honor to be sent away likewise."

"Well, well my friend, be not so desperate. We know our dear Electoral Prince. He is a lion when angry, a child when his anger is appeased. Let us wait ; to-day I shall conceal myself from him, and to-morrow, well, to-morrow he will call for me himself. But did you not say that he had given orders for his horse to be saddled? "

"Yes, indeed, I heard it myself how he commanded them in angry voice to saddle Maurus for him—the wild hunter, you know."

"Where can he be going so early in the morning ? " asked Leuchtmar thoughtfully. "He is so much excited, and love of the Princess will lead him to some rash, ill-advised step ; for you are right, friend, she is a siren ! But hark ! Is not that the voice of the Electoral Prince ? "

"Yes, it is indeed. He is below in the court ! "

The two men hastened through the apartment to one of the windows, and, hiding themselves behind the curtains, looked cautiously down into the court. The Electoral Prince had just swung himself into the saddle. The horse gave a loud neigh, as if recognizing its master, then reared, but the Prince sat firm. His short, furred mantle was lifted high by the wind, the long white ostrich plumes nodded above his broad-brimmed, gold-laced hat, beneath which floated like a lion's mane his brown and curly hair. With firm, energetic hand the youth compelled the animal to stand, then pressed his knees into its flanks, and swift as an arrow from the bow the animal flew out of the court gate. Both gentlemen stepped back from the window.

"He is a splendid young man," sighed the private secretary Müller, shaking his head.

"Yes," echoed Leuchtmar, smiling, "I find it very comprehensible that the Princess Ludovicka should gladly have him as consort. But we must not submit to it, but do everything to prevent it, for it is contrary to policy and reasons of state. And I think, too, such an union would not be for the Prince's welfare, for the Princess—— But hush! the Electoral Prince has forbidden me to speak evil of her, and we are here in his room. Let us keep silence with regard to her."

"But where can he be rushing to now—the Electoral Prince, I mean?"

"I fear that I can guess. To her, to the Princess, and to apologize to her with his looks for the injury which my words have done her. He is just an enthusiastic youth, and it is his first love! Believe me, he is hurrying to her!"

IV.—An Idyl.

Yes, Leuchtmar was quite right. He was away to her—to Ludovicka. To her he was irresistibly drawn by vehement desire. Yes, she was his first love, and the magic of this delicious sensation held his whole being enthralled, and now drove him onward as on the wings of the hurricane. He thought of nothing and knew nothing but that he must see her, must prove to her how passionately he loved her, how fervently and devoutly he believed in her. The horse dashed on furiously, breathlessly, and yet it seemed to the Electoral Prince as if an eternity had elapsed ere he finally reached Castle Doornward. He breathed a glad sigh of relief, threw the reins to the promptly advancing servants, and vaulted from the horse. His beaming eyes were uplifted to his beloved's window, and he saluted her with his thoughts and his smile. He thought she must feel it, and his looks and thoughts must bring her to the window. He stopped and looked up—but Ludovicka did not appear at the window; only an orange-colored ribbon

was fluttering there in the sunshine and the wind, and Frederick William smiled joyfully, for he took it as a token of good fortune. Then he entered the castle, reverentially greeted by the lackeys, who ventured not to oppose him, as with rapid bounds, like a young deer, he sprang up the steps. Straight to the apartments of the Princess Ludovicka he strode, through the antechamber into the drawing room. But she was not there ; she came not to meet him in her enchanting beauty, with that affectionate smile upon her crimson lips. No, Ludovicka was not there, and the chambermaid who officiously hurried from the adjoining room informed the Prince that her most gracious young lady had already been gone an hour on a visit to The Hague, whence she would not return till the next morning. But the sharp, cunning eyes of the Abigail, had meanwhile peered through the door, which the Prince had left open, out into the antechamber, and, finding that no one was there, the Prince having come quite alone, she approached nearer to him.

"Most gracious sir," she whispered, "I was, however, to have gone into town and handed something for the Electoral Prince to his valet, to whom I am engaged."

"Now it will be more convenient for you, Alice," said the Electoral Prince cheerfully. "You need no third party. I am here myself. Give to me personally what you would have given to my valet, your respected betrothed, for me."

"Here it is," whispered Alice, drawing from the pocket attached to her girdle by a silver chain a little note, which, with a graceful bow, she handed to the Prince.

"And here is your reward," he said, taking a gold piece from his purse and handing it to her. She took it, blushing with confusion, and bowed down to the earth.

"If it pleases your grace to read here," whispered she, "I will guard the door."

He shook his head and rushed out. No, not in that narrow, close room, not in the neighborhood of that tiresome chambermaid could be read the letter of his beloved—that letter which he believed, nay, knew, contained the last decision for sealing his whole future fate. In the open air, under God's blue sky, in the warm and radiant autumn sun, would he

receive the message of his beloved, would he take to his heart what the angel of his life had to communicate to him. As rapidly as he had stormed up he again sprang down the steps, and through the well-known rooms and corridors took the way leading to the park. He was well acquainted with it, for he had often taken it at the side of his aunt, the unfortunate Bohemian Queen and Electress, who had found a refuge here in Holland at the court of her uncle, the Stadtholder Frederick Henry of Orange, and had her little residence at Castle Doornward. He had often walked it with the princesses, her daughters, and very bright and pleasant hours had he passed in that beautiful park with Princess Ludovicka.

On one of those squares, in one of those shady thickets where he had so often sat with her and her sisters, he would now read her message. With hasty step, with glowing cheeks fired by enthusiasm, with head aloft, he strode on, and now entered the woods near the path. They were curtained by festoons of wild grapevine; no one could see how he now took out the little note which he had so long concealed in his hand, how he pressed it to his lips, to his eyes, how he then unfolded it, and again, before reading it, pressed the beloved characters to his lips. The letter contained nothing but the words: "The friends are ready and willing. To-night about one o'clock in the Media Nocte. From there flight. A worthy asylum is waiting, and the priest stands before the altar to bless the couple."

"To-night she will be mine—to-night we shall be married! To-night we shall make our escape!"

He could think of nothing but this. His heart continually repeated it with loud jubilation, his lips murmured it softly in response, while, knowing nothing, seeing nothing of the outside world, he sped along through the alleys and over the squares of the garden. He knew not whither he went, he had no aim; he only knew that to-night he was to be indissolubly united with his beloved—that he would flee with her. Once he must pause, for the loudly beating heart denied him breath, and once, in the blissful rapture of his soul, he must give a loud shout of joy, otherwise his breast would have burst. A merry, musical laugh rang forth near to him, and

as he turned to the side whence the sound had proceeded a lovely and pleasing picture met his astonished gaze. In the midst of the grassplot near which he was stood a great white cow, one of those splendid creatures that are only seen on Dutch pastures. A fine-looking maid, dressed in the national costume of the Dutch peasantry, with the gold-edged cap over the full, luxuriant hair that fell in long braids down her back, sat on a stool beside the cow, and was busied in milking. In melodious, regular cadence the steaming milk flowed over her rosy hands down into the white porcelain bucket which she held between her knees. At her side stood a little girl, in almost the identical costume, only that the wide plaited skirt was of black silk, the bodice of purple velvet trimmed with gold buttons and loops, and the white apron of finest linen edged with point lace. Below the short silk skirt, trimmed with purple velvet, peeped forth blue silk stockings with red tops; shoes with high red heels, ornamented with gold buckles, covered the neat little feet. It was altogether quite the costume of a Dutch peasant girl, only the cap was wanting on the head, and in its stead the hair, which fell in long fair ringlets over the child's shoulders, was adorned by a thick wreath of the tendrils of the wild grape, into which, in front just over the brow, were woven two beautiful purple asters. She had been busied, it appeared from the quantity of leaves and flowers she carried in her apron, in weaving wreaths, but now let the contents of her apron fall to the ground, and only kept the green wreath already finished, which hung upon her arm, while she sprang laughing over the grassplot.

"Cousin Frederick William," she asked merrily, "where do you come from, and why do you scream so fearfully?"

"Have I frightened you, Cousin Louisa Henrietta?" he asked, extending both hands to her in greeting.

"Not me, cousin, but Hulda," she returned, holding out her little hands. "You must know, cousin, Hulda is very scary, and it comes from her being sad."

"Who is Hulda? The smart dairymaid there?"

"Hey, God forbid, cousin! How can you think that that dairymaid could be scared? No, Hulda is my pretty white cow, and she is sad because she has lost her little calf. I am

not to blame for it, and I told my poor Hulda that, too, and as she lowed so piteously I wept with her heartily and comforted her."

"But why did you let them take away her little calf? Why did you suffer it? Is it not your own cow?"

"Understand, it is my own cow," replied the little girl, seriously. "My good aunt, the Electress, has made me a present of it, that I may have some pleasure when I come here to Doornward, and it makes me feel as if I were at home. For you must know, cousin, that I have a regular dairy at The Hague."

"No, cousin, I did not know it," said the Electoral Prince, while he looked kindly into the lovely, rosy countenance of the little Princess Louisa Henrietta of Orange.

"You do not know that?" she cried, clapping her little hands together in astonishment. "Yes, I have a dairy—three cows, who belong to myself alone, and for which papa has had built a stable of their own, which is very grand and splendid. And next to the stable is a room for the milk and butter. O cousin! I tell you, it is splendid! The next time you come to us at The Hague, send for me, and I will show you my cows in their stable, and if you are right good, you shall have a glass of milk from my favorite cow."

"Many thanks!" cried the Electoral Prince, laughing. "But I am no friend of warm milk, and understand nothing whatever of farming."

"Well, why should you?" said the Princess gravely. "You are a man, and men have something else to do; they must go to war and govern countries. But women must understand management and know how to keep house."

"So? Must they that?" laughed the Prince. "Common women, indeed, but you, Louisa, you are a Princess."

"But a Princess of Holland, cousin, and my mother has told me that the Princesses of Holland must seek their greatest renown in becoming wise and prudent housewives, and understanding farming thoroughly, in order that all the rest of the women of Holland may learn from them. My mother says that a Prince of Holland should be the first servant of the Sovereign States, but a Princess of Holland should be the first

housekeeper of the Dutch people, and the more skillful she is the more will the people love her. And therefore I shall try to be right skillful, for I shall be so glad if our good people would love me a little."

"Would you, indeed?" asked the Electoral Prince, quite moved by the lovely countenance and the heartfelt tone of the little girl. "Would you be glad if the people loved you a little? Well, I promise you, Cousin Louisa Henrietta, they will love you, and whoever shall look into your good, truthful eyes will feel himself fortunate and glad, just as I do now. Keep your beautiful eyes, Louisa, and your innocence and harmlessness, and be a good housewife, then your people will love you very much. But tell me, cousin, for whom is that wreath which is hanging on your arm?"

"For my beautiful cow; but if you will have it I will give it to you, and—no," she broke off, abashed and reddening, "no, forgive me, dear Cousin Frederick William; I shall not give you a wreath which I destined only for an animal. I shall fix it so," she cried, with a lovely smile, "I shall take this wreath to my Hulda, and to you, cousin, I shall give my own wreath."

She hastily tore the wreath from her own locks, and raising herself on tiptoe tried with uplifted arm to place it on the Prince's head, but he stayed her hand.

"No, cousin," he said; "that must be done properly. You are a lady, a Princess, and if you crown a knight, then let him bow the knee before you."

And he bent his knee before her, and looked up at her smilingly and joyously. "Crown me, Cousin Louisa Henrietta," he said, with ceremonial pathos—"crown me and give me a device."

The little maiden held the crown thoughtfully in her hand, her large blue eyes fixed upon the smiling countenance before her with an earnest, meditative expression.

"Well," he said, "why do you not give me the wreath? And what are you thinking of?"

"Of a motto, cousin," she replied seriously; "for you told me I must give you a device. But I am only a silly little girl, and you must bear with me. Mother said yesterday to me that

the best motto she could give for everyday use is this, 'Be a good woman.' Now I think, if it were rightly changed and turned, it would suit you."

And with charming determination she pressed the wreath upon the Prince's dark locks, and then laid both her hands upon his head.

"Be a good man," she said, "yes, Electoral Prince Frederick William, be a good man."

The smile had suddenly vanished from the Prince's countenance, and given place to a deep earnestness. "Yes," he said solemnly, "I promise you I shall be a good man." And just as he said this the cow bellowed aloud, and Princess Louisa turned her looks upon her and nodded pleasantly.

"Look you, cousin," she said, "Hulda, too, gives you her blessing, and do not laugh at it, for God speaks in all that live; the flowers and beasts emanate from him as well as men. And if man does not do his duty, and is not good and diligent, then God does not love him, and the flower which blooms and the cow that gives milk are dearer to him, for they do their duty. But see, the milkmaid is ready, and now, Cousin Frederick William, now I must go to the milkroom and measure the milk into the pans, and I will tell you, but nobody else shall know, I secretly take a quart cup full of milk, and take it to the calves' stable to the calf, from my Hulda. It ought not, indeed, to drink milk any longer, but be an independent creature, eating hay and chewing the cud, but it will just feel that the milk comes from its own mother, and be glad. Farewell, Cousin Frederick William, I must be gone."

She was about to slip away, but the Electoral Prince held her fast. "No," he said, "not so cursory shall be our leave-taking, my darling little heavenly flower. Who knows when we shall meet again?"

"You are not going away yet, cousin?" she asked, stroking his cheeks with both her little hands. "Ah! they told me that your father would by no means allow you to remain here any longer, and I was so sorry that it made me cry."

"Why did it make you sorry, Cousin Louisa?" asked the Electoral Prince, drawing the little maiden to himself.

She leaned her little head upon his shoulder. "I do not

know," she said, looking at him with her great blue eyes. "I believe I love you so much because you are always so good and friendly to me, and have often talked and played with me, and not laughed at me when I told you about my animals. I thank you for it, my dear, good cousin, and I shall love you as long as I live."

"And I, my dear, good cousin, I thank you for the motto which you have given me, and I shall think of it and of you as long as I live. Yes, my dear child, I will be a good man, and do you know, little Louisa," he continued, smiling, "whenever I am in trouble and danger, I shall think of you and pray, 'God and all ye innocent angels on high, have pity on the innocent and good! Amen!'"

He pressed a fervent kiss on the child's forehead, nodded smilingly to her, took the wreath from his head to conceal it in his bosom, and then strode away with light, quick steps. The child looked thoughtfully after him with her large blue starry eyes, as if lost in thought, until the slender, athletic form of the young man had vanished behind the trees. "How does he know my prayer?" she whispered softly, "and why did he smile as he repeated it? Ah! surely Cousin Ludovicka has told him what a timid little coward I was last night. But hark! Hulda is lowing. Yes, yes, I am coming now!"

And the little girl flew across the grassplot, and flung both her arms around the animal's neck, and stroked and coaxed it, calling it pet names, and telling it of its beautiful calf, to which she would forthwith carry some milk. And the cow lowed no more, but looked with its big intelligent eyes into the child's face.

V.—Media Nocte.

"The gods have come down from Olympus! The gods greet the earth! They greet beauty! They greet youth! They greet wisdom and the arts! The gods greet the earth! Long live the gods! Live Venus, the mother of love! Long live Minerva, the unapproachable virgin, full of wisdom! Long live

Zeus, the god of gods, men transformed into gods, and gods into men! Olympus live on earth!"

So sang they and rejoiced in triumphant chorus, and high above from the clouds pealed forth music, and from thicket and shrubbery sounded sweet songs, dying away in gentle whispers. Then all was still, for the gods, who had traversed the halls in dazzling procession, had now taken their places at the long rose-crowned tables. An Olympic festival was being solemnized that evening in the Media Nocte. Earth was forsaken now, and the children of earth found themselves again on Olympus, changed to gods. Those were not the drawing rooms in which they had been wont to assemble, commingling in cheerful pastimes, in hilarious merriment, these people clad in light Greek robes. No, this was cloud-capped Olympus, this was heaven upon earth; rose-colored, luminous clouds encircled the space, and behind them the galleries which ran round the hall had vanished. Instead of the ceiling usually bounding this vast room, they now looked up to the deep blue sky, and star after star twinkled there, and filled the apartment with soft mild light. And not in a hall furnished with chairs and divans did they find themselves this evening, but in a monstrous grotto in the heart of Olympus—a grotto of sparkling, glittering mountain crystal, bright and transparent as silver gauze, and behind this a magical moving to and fro of beauteous human shapes, of genii and Cupids. Only the long table in the middle of the grotto reminded of earth, or maybe the home of heathen gods. For, like the children of earth, the gods on Olympus used to carouse and drink, and, like the children of men, did they enjoy fullness of food and luscious wine. Golden goblets, wreathed with roses, stood before the silver plates loaded with fruits and tempting viands. In crystal flasks sparkled the golden wine, in silver vases the gay-colored flowers exhaled their sweets. Luxurious cushions, soft as swan's down, spangled and silvery as were the clouds which stooped from heaven, lined both sides of the long table, and on them the gods and goddesses had just sank in blissful silence, gazing on the glorious place, and rejoicing that men are gods and gods are men! There, on high, sits Zeus on golden throne, and Ganymede,

the beautiful boy, stands near and hands him on golden dishes the fragrant ambrosia, and Hebe, the lovely, childlike maid, hovers about, and presents in crystal cups the gleaming purple wine, glistening like gold. Juno, the radiant queen of heaven, sits beside Zeus; and as if woven of silvery clouds and stars seems the garment that lightly and loosely envelops but does not hide the wondrous shape. A light cloud of silver gauze covers her countenance, as that of all the other goddesses.

But now, as all rest in silence, these gods and goddesses, now rises Zeus from his golden throne and bows to both sides, greeting.

"At the table of the gods must be enthroned Truth, the purest, most chaste of all the goddesses, and at her side the wisest, most puissant Genius, the Genius of Silence!" calls out Zeus, with far-resounding voice. "Do you admit that, ye gods and goddesses?"

"We admit it!" call out all in exulting chorus.

"You gods, swear by all that is sacred to you in heaven and upon earth that you will present this evening as a thank offering in sacrifice to the Genius of Silence! That never will pass your lips what your eyes see, never will your eyes betray the memory that shall dwell within your hearts!"

"We swear it by all that is sacred in heaven and upon earth!" cry the gods.

"Ye goddesses all, ye have heard!" cries Zeus, the enthroned. "Now do homage to Truth, as she to the Genius of Silence! Away with falsehood and deceit! Away with your masks!"

And the plump, wanton arms of the goddesses are raised, and the rosy-fingered hands tear the silvery veils from their heads and cast them triumphantly behind them, and triumphantly the gods greet the beaming countenances of the goddesses, their sparkling eyes and rosy lips, the haunts of sweet, seductive smiles.

"Long live the gods and goddesses of Olympus! No earthly memories cleave to them; if perchance they have borne earthly names, who knows it, who remembers it? The present only belongs to the gods—this hour is one of precious joy."

Only those two sitting there at the table of the gods, arm

linked in arm, only they remember, for not alone the present but the future, too, belongs to them. The gods and goddesses call the two Venus and Endymion, but they, in tender whispers, call each other Ludovicka and Frederick. No one disturbs himself about them, no one notices the happy pair, and they observe and regard no one, for they are thinking only of themselves.

"Oh, my beloved," whispers the Prince, "how stale and insipid seems this fantastic feast to me to-night! Once it would have charmed me, and would have been to me as embodied poesy. But to-night it leaves me cold and empty, and I feel that the true and real contain in themselves the highest poetry."

"You are indeed right, my Endymion," says she softly—"you are indeed right: love is the highest poetry, and he who possesses the true and real needs not the fantastic semblance. Still, this is a feast of gods; therefore let us enjoy it with glad hearts and swelling joy. For is it not our wedding feast, and are not all these gods and goddesses unwittingly solemnizing the hymeneal of our love? Rejoice then, my darling, rejoice and sing with the convivial, open your heart to the ravishing hour, drink into thy soul the delight and rapture of the gods!"

A shadow stole over Endymion's high, clear brow, and he gently shook his head. "I love you so deeply and truly that I can not be merry in this hour," he said thoughtfully; "and this wild tumult and this uproarious joy seem not to me like a glorification of our love, but rather its profanation. Ah! my dear love, would that I were alone with you in the open air, beneath the broad high arch of heaven, instead of here beneath this artificial one; would that we sat hand in hand in one of those quiet shady spots in your park, where I could pour into your ear the holy secrets of my heart and tell you sweet stories of our love, and you should listen to me with tranquil, reverent heart, and you and I would solemnize together a glorious feast divine, more glorious than this mad joy can furnish us! He who is happy flees noisy pleasures, and he who loves ardently and truthfully longs for quiet and solitude, to meditate upon his love."

"We shall be solitary and alone, my Frederick, when we belong to one another—when nothing more can separate us, when we shall no more have to meet under the veil of secrecy, no more have to conceal the fair, divine reality under borrowed tinsel! You know, love, to-night we flee."

"God be praised! to-night will make you forever mine, and nothing then can separate us but death alone!"

"Speak not of death while life encircles us with all its charms! Be cheerful, my beloved—be happy, my Endymion. We celebrate the godly feast of love, and yet is it only the foretaste of our bliss. Yield yourself to the delights of the moment, drink from the golden goblet of joy, my Endymion!"

"Yes, I will drink, drink, for Venus drinks with me."

"She hands you, Endymion, the flower-crowned goblet! Drink! drink! drink! Enjoy the moment! Taste the pleasures of this hour! But think of the coming hour which is to consummate our bliss!"

"When will it be, beloved? And where shall I meet you?"

"When all is bustle and stir and singing, then let my Endymion descend from Olympus and repair to the grotto of rocks close by. To the left of the entrance he will find a cavern. Let him go in and there find his white garments; put them on and wait. All the rest follows of itself."

"And you, my heart—will you, too, follow of yourself?"

"Follow of myself and fetch Endymion!"

Music sent forth sweet strains, and from the rosy clouds the chorus of Cupids greeted the gods with songs of rejoicing. After the singing the Muses entered, winding round the table, quoting far-famed songs and praising the arts, which they protected. And suddenly the starry sky above became obscure, and twilight reigned. Only behind the crystalline walls it shone bright and ever brighter, and in sunshine splendor emerged the antique marble statues of the gods, and walked and moved, endowed with flesh and growing life. Music resounded and bands of Cupids sang; again the hall was lighted up, the tables at which the gods had reclined vanished, geniuses hovered about, strewing the ground with fragrant flowers, and in glad confusion mingled gods and goddesses, heroes

and demigods, with sparkling eyes and beating hearts. They poetized and sang, praised the gods, and laughed and shouted, "Long live the Media Nocte! Long live those great minds and noble hearts which belong to it!" And all was bustle, stir, and song!

Endymion forsook Olympus, entered the nearest grotto amid the rocks, and slipped into the little cavern to the left. Venus was still in the hall. To her came Hercules and softly whispered, "All is ready!"

"But where? Tell me, where? It seems to me like a dream! You see how I trust you, for without question have I done everything just as the paper directed. Here I am, in the Media Nocte, and know not at all what remains to be done!"

"The marriage ceremony and flight, fair Venus! Listen, however, to this one thing! In close proximity to this house, as you well know, stands the hotel of the French embassy. Well, gracious lady, walls can be leveled, and my enchanter Ducato can turn them into doors! Repair to the grotto hall and the cavern on the right. There will Venus be transformed into the Princess Ludovicka, and still be Venus! Then cross over to the cavern on the left, where, instead of Endymion, waits the Electoral Prince. She gives him her hand! My enchanter Ducato sees it, and all the rest takes care of itself. Only follow the god within your own breast! Only one thing more, Princess! Be Venus to him, and ravish his heart and soul, that he may not delay to sign the contract and inquire into its contents."

"Be not uneasy," smiles Venus proudly; "he will sign anything to be able to call me his."

Louder resound the peals of music, and all the gods sing and laugh and jest and shout. And the Bacchantes swing to and fro their ivy-wreathed staves, and their mouths with ecstasy pour forth their stammering songs of mirth! Venus has soared away! But no one observes it. Each is his own deity, here in the Media Nocte. Oh, blessed night of the gods! Forget that the wretched day of man will return in the morning! Louder resound the strains of music, and all is bustle, stir, and song there in Olympus!

From the cavern on the right steps forth the Princess Ludo-

vicka in white satin robe, a myrtle wreath twined in her hair, and behind her sweeps her veil like a silver cloud. Venus! Venus ever! full of sweet enchantment!

She goes to the cavern on the left, and gently knocks. The door springs open, and she enters. It is bright within, and the Electoral Prince, in gold-embroidered suit, comes to meet her with beaming eyes, looks upon her radiant with happiness, and sinks down at her feet. Endymion! Endymion ever! Enchained by sweet magic! A door flies open; nobody has opened it, but there it is. The Electoral Prince jumps up and offers the Princess his hand. Neither of the two speaks, for their hearts are beating overloud. The merry music and uproarious shouts of the gods on Olympus penetrate to them even in the stillness of the cave, but through the open door other sounds steal near. Solemn, long-drawn organ peals are heard, uniting in the melody of a pious choral. How strangely blended within that narrow space those exultant songs and those organ tones! The young lovers hear only the notes of the organ, and hand in hand move toward the sound.

A small pleasure boat receives them, flowers and myrtle trees line the banks, and inviting and alluring the organ calls them. Light glimmers at the end of the passage, and the lovers go toward it. They enter a large wide room! Solemn silence reigns here. At the farther end is a small altar. On it burn tall wax tapers, and before it, in full canonicals, stands the priest, prayer book in hand. At his sides are two gentlemen in simple, somber dress.

Farther forward, nearer the center of the hall, is a table hung with green, on which lie several papers and implements of writing, and near it is a notary in his official garb, again attended by several men. To all this Prince Frederick William gives but one brief glance, then turns his eyes once more upon his beloved, standing at his side, radiant in beauty and enticingly sweet. The jubilant songs of Olympus yet ring in their ears, the images of the gods yet flame and flaunt before their eyes.

"How beautiful you are, beloved Ludovicka! My Electoral Princess! come, let us go to the altar! Oh, your good,

kind friends! How I thank them! How well they have arranged everything! Come! You see, the priest is waiting!"

"Not yet, beloved! For you see before the priest stands the notary, and my good friends will have us go through all the formalities of legal marriage. Before we are married we must sign the contract!"

"The contract of love is written in our hearts alone. What need for the intervention of signatures on paper? And how can strangers know what we alone can settle with one another? I swear unswerving love and fidelity to my Electoral Princess, and that requires no written confirmation. Come to the altar, dearest!"

He endeavors to draw her forward, but Ludovicka flings her arm about his neck and holds him back. Beloved," she whispers, "the contract which we sign concerns not us, but the benevolent, mighty friends, who have lent us their aid, and will help us still further. Ah! without these noble friends our flight would have been wholly impossible, and we would have been separated for ever! To-morrow I would have been the bride of the Prince of Hesse, and your father would already have found means to compel your return home. Ah! beloved, they would have separated us, if our noble friends had not helped us. They have prepared everything, cared for everything. As soon as we are married, we shall journey away to our safe asylum, and there, under the protection of friends, be sheltered and secure. For such love and devotion we must be grateful, must we not?"

"Certainly, that we must, and shall be gladly, beloved of my heart! Let them say how we can prove our gratitude, and certainly it shall be done!"

"They have said it, and written it down in the contract. Come, dearest, we will sign it, and then to the altar."

She throws her arm around his neck, she draws him to the table where stands the notary with his witnesses. She hands him the pen and looks at him with a sweet smile.

Venus! Venus ever!

But he? He is no longer Endymion! He is the Electoral Prince Frederick William! And strange! like a dream, like

a greeting from afar, comes stealing to his ears, "Be a good man."

"Take the pen and sign!" whispers Venus, with glowing looks of love.

He lays down the pen. "I must know what I sign. Read it, Sir Notary!"

The notary bows low and reads: "In friendship and devotion to the Electoral Prince Frederick William of Brandenburg and his spouse, born Princess Ludovicka Hollandine of the Palatinate, we grant them an undisturbed asylum in our territories, promise to protect and defend them with all our power, to grant them, besides, maintenance and support, paying to the Electoral Prince of Brandenburg yearly subsidies of three hundred thousand livres, until he assumes the reins of government. On his side, the Electoral Prince of Brandenburg pledges himself, so soon as he begins to rule in his own right, to conclude a league with us for twenty years, and never to unite with our enemies against us, but to be true to us in good as also in evil days. Both parties confirm this by their signatures. Count d'Entragues has signed in the name of France."

"France!" cried the Electoral Prince, with loudly ringing voice. "France is the friend who will lend us aid?"

"Yes, Prince, France it is," said Count d'Entragues, approaching the Prince and bowing low before him. "France through me offers to the noble Electoral Prince of Brandenburg protection and an asylum, pays him rich subsidies, and in return requires nothing but his alliance, and, above all things, his friendship. I am happy to offer the friendship and good offices of King Louis XIII and Cardinal Richelieu to the Electoral Prince of Brandenburg and his spouse, and to be permitted to witness the ceremony of their marriage."

"Come, my beloved, sign," whispered Ludovicka, with pleading voice.

But he thrust back the pen, and looked at the Princess with flaming eyes. "Did you know, Princess, that it was France who was to assist us?"

"Certainly I knew it," replied she, with feigned astonishment. "Count d'Entragues himself offered me the assistance

of France, and you gave me full powers to conclude all arrangements."

"It is true, so I did," murmured the Prince. "I thought you had reference to a private person, to one of those rich mynheers whom I have met at your house. I told you so, Princess, and you did not contradict me. You left me under the impression that it was a merchant of Holland who was offering his help and protection. From a private citizen I could have accepted aid, for that pledged the man, not the Prince. But from France I can accept no favors, for by such would be pledged and bound the Prince, the future ruler of his land, so that he could not act freely according to his judgment and the requirements of the case, but be subjected to restraint. Sir Count d'Entragues, I shall not sign."

The Princess uttered a shriek and threw both her arms round him.

"If you are serious in that, beloved, then are we lost, for who will help us if France will not?"

"God and ourselves, Ludovicka!"

"God listens not to our entreaties, and we are too weak to help ourselves. Oh, my beloved, prove now that you love me—that your vows are true. I am lost to you and you to me if we do not escape to-night—lost if we accept not France's aid. Look, here is the sheet of paper; our whole future lies on it. I offer it to you, beloved, and with it my life, my love, my happiness. Will you scorn me?"

She held out to him both her trembling hands, and looked at him with glances of entreaty. He returned the look, and a deadly paleness overspread his face. He took the sheet of paper from her hands—she opened her mouth for a cry of joy—then a shrill, rasping sound—he had torn the paper in two, and both pieces fell slowly to the ground.

"That is my answer, so help me God! I can do no otherwise."

A cry sounded from Ludovicka's lips, but it was a cry of horror. She reeled back, as if a fearful blow had struck her, and stared at the Prince with wide-open eyes.

"You reject me with disdain?" she asked in a toneless voice. "You will not flee with me?"

He rushed toward her, cast himself upon his knees before her, kissing her dress and hands with passionate ardor.

"Forgive me, Ludovicka, forgive me! I can not act differently. I can not be a traitor to my country, to my father, to Germany. I can not listen to my heart, with regard to my future, for my future belongs to my people, my native land, not to myself alone. Go home, beloved; be steadfast and courageous, as I shall be, and then we shall conquer destiny itself and win victory for our love."

"Stand up, Electoral Prince of Brandenburg!" she cried imperiously, and with angry glance. "Now answer me, will you accept the help of France, and flee with me?"

He turned away from her with a deep sigh. "No, I shall not accept the help of France."

"Count d'Entragues," said the Princess, with shrill, quivering voice, "you are a gentleman; I place myself under your protection. You will immediately conduct me to Doornward."

The count hastened to her and offered her his hand. She accepted it, and he led her slowly through the vast hall to one of the doors of entrance.

The Electoral Prince looked after her with distorted features and burning eyes. Once he made a movement as if to rush after her, but by a mighty effort he kept his place. Arrived at the door, she paused and turned upon him an earnest, questioning glance; he cast down his eyes before it. Count d'Entragues opened the door—a breathless pause ensued—then the door closed behind her.

The Electoral Prince placed his trembling hand upon his heart, and two tears rolled from his eyes. Violently he shook them away, and turned his head to the notary.

"Sir," he said, in a firm voice—"sir, I beg you to show me the way out. I would go to my palace."

VI.—The Hardest Victory.

The Electoral Prince had returned home, but he did not sleep the whole night through. The chamberlain, whose room adjoined the Prince's sleeping apartment, had heard him restlessly pacing the floor all night long, at times talking to himself half aloud, and then even weeping and lamenting. In his anguish of heart he had wakened Baron Leuchtmar and the private secretary Müller, in order to impart to them the melancholy news. Both gentlemen had immediately risen and dressed themselves, and softly approached the door of the princely chamber. They, too, had heard the restless steps, the loud groans and lamentations of the Prince, and his grief had passed into their own hearts. As they looked at each other, each observed tears in the eyes of the other, and with quivering lips both whispered, "Poor young man! he must have some great grief! He suffers a great deal!"

"You must go to him, Leuchtmar," whispered Müller. "You must ask what ails him, and try to comfort him."

The baron mournfully shook his head. "My dear Müller," he said, "have you ever been in love?"

"No, never!" replied Müller, in astonishment. "Why do you ask such a question?"

"Because you would then know, friend, that there is no consolation for disappointment in love."

"You think, then, that the Prince is disappointed in love?"

"Certainly, I think so. What other grief can a young Prince of hardly eighteen years have, especially when his heart is engrossed with a glowing passion. The Prince was last night in the Media Nocte, and something peculiar must have occurred there, for he came home unusually early, his custom having been of late not to return home until daybreak, singing and rejoicing."

"Only hear, Leuchtmar, how he sobs and groans! And now! Hush! what does he say?"

Both gentlemen held their breath, and quite distinctly

could be heard within the wailing, tear-choked voice of the Prince:

"It is impossible—it is impossible. I can not. No, I can not. The sacrifice is too heavy! My heart will break!"

"Hear him well," whispered Müller, amid his tears; "he can not make the sacrifice. He will die of grief. My God! go to him, baron. Tell him he need not make the sacrifice. No one can require of him the impossible. Go to him, man! Be humane. My God! only hear how he laments and groans!"

"I hear it, but I can not go in. I do not know his sorrow, and if the Prince needs me he can call me."

"You are a savage," said Müller desperately. "Well, if you will not comfort him, then shall I go to him."

He stretched out his hand for the door knob, but Baron Leuchtmar held him back, and led the good private secretary back to his own room.

"Let us go to bed, friend," he said; "even if we can not sleep, as is probable, yet we can rest, which is needful for our aged limbs. We can not yet help the Prince; and, believe me, he would never forgive us if we were to go to him unsummoned, thereby betraying that we have been privy to his suffering and his pain. He has a grief, there is no question about that; but he is retiringly modest, and at the same time has a stout heart that will admit no one to share with him a burden he has perhaps imposed upon himself. I am glad of this, Müller, and I tell you such hours of solitary grief purify the manly heart; in them the old myth is verified, from the fire and ashes of spent sorrows springs up the new-fledged phœnix. Should we prevent our Prince from passing through his purgatory, that he may emerge from the flames as a phœnix and a victorious hero?"

"You may be right," sighed Müller, "but I only know that he is suffering bitterly."

Baron Leuchtmar smiled sadly. "May these sufferings steel his heart," he said, "that he may be armed against greater and bitterer trials! Come, Müller, we will to bed, and to sleep."

But, however composedly and resolutely the baron had

opposed himself to the suggestions of his soft-hearted colleague, sleep that night forsook his eyes, and ever he heard in imagination the Prince's groans and laments. At times he could hardly repress his longing to get up, to creep to the Prince's door and listen, that he might discover whether he were still awake. But the baron forcibly restrained himself, and finally, as day already began to dawn, he actually fell asleep. He might possibly have slept a few hours, but his servant approached his couch and roused him.

"Baron," he said, "some one is here who urgently desires to speak to you."

"Who, Frederick, who is there?" asked Baron Leuchtmar, quickly rising.

"The chamberlain, Baron von Marwitz, has arrived from Berlin."

"Marwitz, the Elector's first chamberlain?" cried the baron. "Quick, my clothes, quick! Help me to dress myself. Run and tell Baron von Marwitz that I will be at his service directly. But first tell me whether his highness is already visible. Has he already ordered his breakfast?"

"No, baron, I believe all is still quiet in his highness's apartments."

"God be thanked! God be thanked! Now present my compliments to Baron von Marwitz, and then come quickly and help me."

Ten minutes later Baron Kalkhun von Leuchtmar entered the Prince's reception room, where the chamberlain, Baron von Marwitz, awaited him. The two had a long conversation together, Leuchtmar listening with thoughtful mien to Marwitz's narration of the state of affairs at home.

"Marwitz," he said, at the close of their conversation, "we have been good and tried friends from our childhood; I know that the electoral house and our fatherland lie as near to your heart as to my own, and that I can trust you. I therefore tell you you have come at a fortunate hour, and God sends you! The heart of the Prince is wrung by a mighty sorrow, and he probably knows no way out of his griefs. You will show him one, and if he is actually the aspiring and noble-hearted Prince, whom God has sent for the blessing of his house and

the hope of his country, then will he appreciate this way and walk in it. Go to him now, Marwitz, and lay before him candidly and without reserve, as you have done before me, the deplorable condition of things in our native land."

"You will come with me, Leuchtmar, and present me to the Electoral Prince?"

"No, baron. You must suffer yourself to be announced by the chamberlain, for the Prince dismissed me yesterday in wrath. Hush, my friend! say not a word, it is not so bad! The heart of the Prince has reached a crisis in its history which will soon be past, and then, well then, he will call me of himself again. But I shall wait for that. I can not intrude upon him now."

"My friend," sighed Marwitz, "I begin to be afraid. If you do not support me, I will surely fail in my errand, and, like Schlieben, be forced to return disappointed to Berlin."

"I think not. Only be of good courage and speak boldly, as your heart and your love of country dictate."

"Is the Electoral Prince already up?" he asked of the man in waiting, and, as he received nothing but a shrug of the shoulders in reply, Leuchtmar beckoned to him to come nearer, and retired with him into a recess of one of the windows.

"Well, what is it, old Dietrich? You have seen the Electoral Prince already, have you not?"

"Yes, baron. He has not been to bed at all, but still has on the clothes he wore when he went away last night. He is just as pale as a sheet, and his eyes which usually shine so gloriously are to-day quite dim. He called me, and I thought he was about to order breakfast, but no! Something quite different he wanted, and it struck me as peculiarly strange. The Electoral Prince asked me who was on duty this week, I or the second valet, Eberhard? I told him Eberhard, for his week began yesterday. Then said the Electoral Prince: 'Well, Dietrich, I want you to exchange with him this time, for I would like to have you to wait upon me this week, and Eberhard shall have a holiday the whole week. I only want to see your old face about me!' Is not that strange, Sir Baron? Until yesterday Eberhard stood in such high favor, and my

gracious master always preferred being dressed by him. Only yesterday evening Eberhard must accompany him to the feast, and now, all at once, my gracious master will not see him! Something must have happened, for last night Eberhard came home much later than the Electoral Prince, and asked, as if bewildered, whether his highness had been back long; and when I told him that the Electoral Prince had bidden me change with him, he turned deadly pale, trembled in every limb, and said, 'It is all over with me!' Baron, something surely happened last night."

"Probably Eberhard has been guilty of some negligence," said Leuchtmar carelessly. "He has often been negligent of late, as it seems to me. He has some love affair on hand, has he not?"

"Yes, Sir Baron, he has gotten in with that artful chambermaid of the Princess Ludovicka, out there at Doornward, and they are engaged to one another. But people do not say much good of Madame Alice: she is a cunning French girl and——"

"Do not trouble yourself about what people say," interrupted the baron. "Do your own duty and rejoice that for this week the Electoral Prince gives you the preference over Eberhard. Go, now, and announce to his highness the chamberlain, Baron von Marwitz, from Berlin."

A few minutes later the gentleman announced entered the Prince's drawing room. Frederick William advanced into the middle of the room to meet him, and greeted him with grave courtesy.

"I was expecting you, baron," he said coldly.

"Your highness was expecting me?" asked the baron, astonished. "Your highness knew already that I would come?"

"Yes, I knew it, baron. My mother's court painter, Gabriel Nietzel, arrived yesterday, and through him my gracious mother informed me that the Elector would send you to me with a very serious and angry message. You see, I am prepared. Deliver your message now, baron. Let us be seated."

The Prince sat down in the armchair and made the baron sit opposite him. His large eyes were fixed upon Marwitz, and

burned with a strange, sad light. His noble pale countenance was of touching beauty.

"You hesitate?" asked the Prince quietly, after a pause. "What you have to say to me is, then, very bad?"

"No, your highness, not therefor did I delay," cried the baron, with feeling. "Your appearance bewildered me, because it pleased me so much. I have not seen your highness for three years. You were then hardly fifteen years old, a noble, promising boy, and now I behold you with rapture and delight, seeing that all our expectations have been fulfilled, and that out of the boy has grown a strong, noble, and serious young man. Yes, Prince, I read it in your countenance, your unhappy fatherland, your unhappy, much-to-be-pitied Brandenburgers, may look with trust and confidence to the future, for you will save and rescue them."

"Save them from what? Rescue them from what?" asked the Prince, in cold and measured phrase. "Why do you call my fatherland unhappy, and why do you say that the Brandenburgers are to be pitied? Is not my fatherland, for doubtless you do not mean Germany, but my special fatherland, in which I have been born and reared, is not the Mark Brandenburg now quite happy and peaceful, as it has been for some years past, since it is again under the Emperor's protection and favor, in pleasant neutrality between the two inimical parties? And as to my good Brandenburgers, I can not imagine how you can call them so much to be pitied when Count Adam von Schwarzenberg is still Stadtholder in the Mark—Count Adam von Schwarzenberg, who certainly must have the good of Brandenburg at heart, since he knows how much my father loves him and trusts to him. He will always show himself worthy of confidence, I doubt not, and I have the highest respect for my father's great and wise minister."

"Ah! your highness mistrusts me," cried Marwitz with an expression of pain. "Your highness takes me for one of Schwarzenberg's adherents."

"No, I take you for what you are, the messenger and emissary of my father, the Elector of Brandenburg."

"Your highness would thereby say that this messenger and emissary has consequently received his orders from Count

Schwarzenberg, because the count is really lord of the Mark and the Elector's right hand. I read in your countenance that you do so, and that therefore you mistrust me. But I swear to you, Prince, you may believe in my honest, upright intentions—you may believe that what I say is in solemn earnest."

"I believe it, certainly I believe it," said the Prince. "You have undertaken the commissions of the Elector and his Minister Schwarzenberg; naturally you will be in earnest in executing them."

"Prince, I have undertaken the commissions, the behests of the Elector; but from himself and not from his minister did I obtain them. I have sworn to execute them, and do you know why?"

"Why? Simply because you are your master's obedient servant."

"No, Prince, because I am a faithful servant of my country, and because I have a heart to feel for her affliction and distress. The Elector has commanded me to travel to The Hague, and to convey his strict injunction to the Electoral Prince that he shall immediately set out and return home to Berlin. The Elector bids me say to your highness that he has committed to me five thousand dollars to defray the expenses of your journey back and for the liquidation of the most pressing debts. Should this sum not suffice, then am I empowered, in the name of his Electoral Highness, to give security for the payment of the other debts, and your highness is so to arrange your journey that your suite may follow in the least expensive way possible. I was to urge on you seriously and decidedly the propriety of departure, and your father bids me state to you that he has his own peculiarly strong reasons for esteeming a further sojourn in Holland neither safe, profitable, nor reputable. I was to assure your highness that you were not to be recalled, in order to be forced into a repulsive marriage. At the same time, the Elector desires that you return unembarrassed by engagements, and that you by no means entangle yourself by marriage without his knowledge and consent, for to such a union would the Elector not agree, nor ratify it." *

* The Elector's own words. See von Orlich, vol. i.

"Is that all you have to say to me?" asked the Prince, when Marwitz was silent.

"Prince, it is all I have to say to you in the Elector's name, and I have herewith executed the commission intrusted to me. But I have something still to add. I have still to execute the commissions given me by your future land, by your future subjects. I have to transmit to you the tears of the wretched, the sighs of the impoverished, the cries of the despairing, the agonized shriek of all the provinces, all the towns, all the villages, houses, and huts in the Mark. Prince, from the depth of their affliction all hearts uplift themselves to you; in the midst of their despair, the oppressed, the downtrodden, the tormented all venture to hope in you, and in spirit they kneel before you and with outstretched hands entreat you, as I do now, 'Pity our distress, future Elector of Brandenburg, have compassion upon the lands and provinces which shall one day constitute your state. Turn not a deaf ear to the prayers, the hopes of your future subjects.'"

Marwitz had sunk upon the floor, and stretched his clasped hands out to the Prince, who looked thoughtfully into his excited face.

"And what would my future subjects have, what do they desire of me?"

"That you forthwith, without delay, return to the Mark by the speediest way possible."

"I?" cried the Electoral Prince, with a mocking smile. "Your wishes and entreaties, and those of the Brandenburgers, coincide very exactly with my father's orders!"

"Yes, they do coincide, but spring from different motives. Prince, we implore, we entreat you to return; no longer give us over to the caprice, the villainy, the tyranny and avarice of Count von Schwarzenberg. He is the evil demon of your father, of your country. Come home and frighten him away!"

The Prince started, and for a moment a deep glow suffused his pale countenance. His look penetrated deeper into the baron's uplifted, beseeching eyes, as if through them he would read into the very depths of his heart.

"Stand up, Marwitz," he said, after a long pause—"stand up, for you are too old and too venerable to kneel before so

young a man as myself. Rise, sit down near me, and explain your words more clearly. What good can my return home do, and how think you that I can benefit the land? And first and foremost, why do you call Count Schwarzenberg the evil demon of my father and his country?"

"Permit me, your highness, to answer the last question first, and thus will you understand the rest. Count Schwarzenberg is answerable for all the distress, wretchedness, and misery which envelop the Mark, Prussia, indeed all parts of your devastated and distracted land, for he acts contrary to the true interests of the Elector and his land, being wholly devoted to the interests of his own master, the Emperor of Germany. To this end all is worked and manœuvred, with this aim all efforts are undertaken, to ruin Brandenburg, and take from it all power and consideration, yea, all hope, in order that it may be rendered dependent upon the Emperor and empire, and become less dangerous. For the benefit of the Emperor, and to the detriment of the Elector and his land, has Count Schwarzenberg concluded the treaty of Prague. Up to that time Brandenburg was the ally of Sweden, now it is neutral—that is to say, it is the prey of both parties; it is visited, laid under contribution, and plundered by the Swedish and Imperialist troops, and can apply for redress to no one, expect aid from no one. With each day the misery increases more and more. All trade and commerce languish; in the country the fields remain untilled, in the towns the artisans are unemployed, nobody finds work or wages. Hunger and want, and in their retinue sickness and death, daily demand hundreds of victims. The Swede has possession of your rightful heritage, Pomerania, and the Imperialists press to invade the Pomeranian towns and lay them under contribution, without thinking of leaving the vanquished cities wherewithal to pay tribute to their Sovereign, the Elector of Brandenburg. Imperialist is to become the whole Mark, the whole of Pomerania and Prussia, Westphalia and the duchy of Cleves. Imperialist and Catholic—that is Count Schwarzenberg's plan, and with cruel consistency he puts in motion everything that can conduce to its accomplishment. To prevent the recovery, the prosperity of Prussia and the Mark is

the aim of all his policy. He exhausts the land, and yet more than the enemy plunders and taxes the towns, enriching himself through the blood and tears of the tortured citizens and hungry peasantry, living in luxury and splendor, while the Elector is suffering want, while his land is starved and unproductive."

"Abominable! horrible!" groaned the Electoral Prince, covering his face with both his hands, probably to conceal from Marwitz the tears which stood in his eyes.

"Prince," cried Marwitz joyfully, "you are moved! The afflictions of your country touch your noble heart! Oh, may God be with you in this hour, and strengthen you for noble and great resolves!"

"What do you require of me?" asked the Prince, after a pause, slowly withdrawing his hands from his livid face. "What can I do?"

"You can come home, Prince, come home to the unhappy land whose future lord you are by the appointment of God. Your mere presence will be a comfort to the unhappy, a terror to Schwarzenberg. On you rest the hopes of all patriots. You are the standard around whom they rally, the banner to which they look up in hope and patience, for which, if needs be, they will battle to the last drop of their blood. You furnish us all with a center and support, perhaps even your father himself, who maybe sometimes fears his own almighty minister, certainly your mother, who longs for her son as her stay and support! Prince, one more last word. I say it with hesitation, I would not even intrust it to the air, and yet it must be spoken—Prince, the power of Count Schwarzenberg over your father's heart is great, and—and—Count Schwarzenberg is a believing Catholic! It would be a new pillar to his might if the Elector——"

"Hush, hush!" interrupted the Electoral Prince, jumping up from his seat. "Not another word! You are right, the very air itself may not hear such words! Bury them in your heart and never again utter them! These are fearful tidings, which you have brought me, Marwitz, and my heart is bitterly, painfully moved by them, so that for an instant I——"

"Oh, my beloved young master," entreated Marwitz, "let not your heart be merely touched by them, but be inspired and sanctified. Embrace a high noble decision. Conquer yourself, and——"

With uplifted hand the Electoral Prince beckoned him to be silent, and with rapid step and head sunk he paced up and down the apartment. Then all at once he stopped, and, quickly raising his head, asked, "Where is Leuchtmar? Why did he not come with you?"

"I know not, Prince—he told me he could not dare to appear in your presence; he——"

"Ah! that is true," said the Prince mournfully; "we have not seen each other since—— I beg of you, Marwitz, to go and fetch Leuchtmar to me."

The baron made haste to execute the Prince's mandate. Frederick William looked after him until the door closed behind him. Then his large, moist eyes were slowly upraised to heaven, and his trembling lips murmured: "Oh, how young I am yet, and how much I have still to learn! Help me, my God, that I may have the needed strength!"

Again the door opened, and Marwitz entered, followed by Leuchtmar, who remained standing at the door. The Electoral Prince looked at him with questioning glances, and ever brighter became his brow, ever more cheerful his aspect. And all at once he spread out his arms, and in a tone of most heartfelt love, most tender pleading, called out, "My beloved teacher! come to my arms!"

Leuchtmar sprang forward with a cry of joy. The Prince tenderly fell on his neck and pressed him closely to his breast.

"Oh," he murmured softly, "my friend, I have suffered much, and still suffer. Forgive me on account of my pain!"

And he leaned his head on Leuchtmar's shoulder and wept bitterly. A long pause ensued. No one of the three could interrupt it, for speech remained locked upon the trembling lips of all, and only their tears, their sighs spoke. Then the door slowly opened, and the private secretary, Müller, appeared upon the threshold. For a moment he stood still, and looked with quivering lips upon the Prince, who was just slowly

extricating himself from Leuchtmar's embrace, then he stepped resolutely forward.

"Your highness," he said, "forgive me for venturing to intrude my presence here, without having been summoned. But old Dietrich dared not take the step which I do now, and so the responsibility rests upon myself alone."

"And what is it?" asked the Prince. "What brings you to me, my dear, true friend?"

"He calls me his dear, true friend!" rejoiced Müller. "All is right again, then—all is in order! We are not dismissed—we are not sent home!"

"You may be, after all, my old friend," said the Electoral Prince, with a feeble smile. "But what would you say to me? What sort of responsibility have you taken upon yourself?"

"Prince, I have taken upon myself the responsibility of admitting into your cabinet the veiled lady who has just come, and of requesting you to grant her the audience for which she has been besieging Dietrich with tears and lamentations. Dietrich, however, would not hear to it, and the lady continually called for Eberhard to come—Eberhard must lead her to the Prince. But, as Dietrich says, this is not Eberhard's week of service, so that he can not enter here. I was attracted to the antechamber by the loud conversation, and now the lady turned upon me, and pleaded so touchingly and so eloquently, that I could not refuse to grant her request. Your highness, I have conducted the lady into your cabinet, and she awaits you there."

"But, Müller," cried Baron Leuchtmar despairingly, "what have you done? How could you be so inconsiderate?"

The old man drew himself up, and his mild eye grew angry. "Inconsiderate! I was not at all inconsiderate, Baron Leuchtmar. On the contrary, I thought it would be unworthy of a noble Prince to allow a woman to plead in vain, and I thought, moreover, that Hercules would never have become a hero if he had not had the valor to meet the women who greeted him at the crossing of the roads."

"You have done right, Müller," said Frederick William, with a faint smile; "it will be seen whether Hercules was

perhaps my forefather. I shall speak to the lady. Wait for me here."

He crossed the apartment hastily, and entered his cabinet. In the center of the room stood a veiled female form. The Prince, however, recognized her, although her face could not be seen, for he knew her by her pretty coquettish costume to be the Princess Ludovicka's French chambermaid, and he stepped quickly up to her.

"I thought that it was you, Alice," he said softly, "and I have therefore come to tell you to——"

With sudden movement she tore back her veil, and before the pale, beautiful countenance thereby revealed the Prince stepped back, as pale as death.

"You yourself?" he murmured. "You, Ludovicka?"

"Yes, I, Ludovicka! I come here in my maid's dress," said she, in a voice trembling with pain and emotion. "I come to you, my beloved, to ask you whether you will desert me, leaving me in despair, affliction, and heart-sickness? O Frederick, Frederick! how fearfully have I suffered this night!"

"And I?" murmured he softly. "Have I not suffered too?"

"No," she cried, "you have not suffered as I did, for you love me not as I love you—you love me not more than your life, your honor, your fatherland! You will abandon and forsake me, because it is France that has offered us aid! Oh, you are a cold, heartless man, as all men are, and yet I love you so much and can not live without you! Frederick William, you will not go with me to France—well then, I will go with you, wherever you will. I cleave to you—I will stay with you! Let shame and ignominy be my fate, let my mother curse me, let all the world despise me and call me your mistress, I will stay with you, for I love you and can not live without you!"

Passionately she extended her arms to him, love flaming in her glances. But a darker shadow flitted across the Prince's face, and he shrank back.

"God forbid, Ludovicka," he said, "that misery and shame should ever come to you through me, that your mother should curse you for my sake! We are both yet children, Ludovicka. I felt right painfully last night that the first duty of children

is to obey and reverence their parents. Let us do our duty, Ludovicka!"

"That is," replied she with swelling rage—"that is to say, you give me up? They have overcome your opposition, they have brought you back to obedience, to subjection?"

"No other than myself has done it, Ludovicka.".

"You? You give me up? Voluntarily? And yet you swore that you loved me and me alone of all the world?"

"And I swore truly, Ludovicka. I love you boundlessly!"

"And yet you will forsake me?"

"Yet I must do so, beloved! I must forsake you, but God alone, who has witnessed my tortures this past night, knows what I suffer. My father is solitary, my fatherland calls to me, and the first thing that I sacrifice on its altar is my love for you. I can not marry you, Ludovicka, and God forbid that I should accept your love without marriage!"

"Words, nothing but words!" cried she indignantly. "You would palliate your unfaithfulness, represent your fickleness of mind as magnanimity! But I hear only one thing in your words—you give me up, you renounce your love?"

"Yes!" he cried with a loud scream of pain—"yes, I renounce my love!"

"Vengeance upon you for it!" cried she, in flaming wrath. "I, Ludovicka Hollandine, cry vengeance upon you, for you break my heart!"

"And you will have no compassion? You will not see what I suffer? Ludovicka, look! Look in my eyes, they wept out last night the pains of a whole life—see what I suffer! Ludovicka, on my knees I beseech you, if you really love me, then have pity upon me—for the sake of my agony forgive me what you suffer!"

And beside himself with emotion, he fell upon his knees, lifting up to her his clasped hands and his face that was bathed in tears.

But now it was she who shrank back. "No," said she harshly and severely, "no, no compassion, no forgiveness! I do not love you, I have never loved you, for you are a foolish boy, and know nothing of the glow of passion! You are a

child! Go away and act like a child, and be an obedient son! Love rejects you! love turns from you!"

And waving him off with both hands, the Princess turned and walked to the door. Frederick William, still upon his knees, heard her quickly retreating steps, but did not rise. Ludovicka had already stretched out her hand to open the door; but she turned round once more, and in tones of mingled love and grief cried, "Frederick, will you let me go?"

He did not answer, his head sank lower, and a painful groan forced itself from his breast. She opened the door—he heard it—he saw the streak of light that crossed the room through the open door, it vanished—the door had closed. Then was wrung from the Prince's breast a shriek of agony such as only issues from the lips of man under the pressure of earth's sharpest pangs.

The three gentlemen were yet assembled in the Prince's drawing room, conversing and imparting to one another their fears and hopes. All at once the door of the cabinet opened and the Electoral Prince entered. Pale as death, but with firm, determined features, he stepped up to the three gentlemen, who looked at him with tender, anxious glances.

"Marwitz," he said, "you can this very day set out on your return to Berlin, for your mission is fulfilled. Say to my father that as an obedient son I submit to his wishes, and shall forthwith depart for Berlin."

The three gentlemen only answered him by a single cry of joy, and, animated by one feeling, one inspiration, sank upon their knees and prayed aloud, "Bless, O God! bless the Prince, who has conquered himself!"

"What is going on here?" asked a loud manly voice behind them. "What means this? Three gentlemen on their knees, and my young cousin looking on like the Knight St. George!"

"And so he is, Prince of Orange," cried Baron Leuchtmar, rising and advancing to meet the Prince, who had come in unannounced, as was his wont at the house of his cousin. "Yes, he is a Knight St. George, who has conquered the dragon. You know, Prince Henry, how sweetly they have enticed him, with what magic chains they have been encircling

him. You know the Media Nocte and "—added he softly—"the Princess Ludovicka."

"Well, and what more now?" asked the Prince, with eager interest.

"Not much, cousin," said Frederick William, with a melancholy smile. "I must bid you farewell. I owe it to my parents, to my honor, and my country, forthwith to leave The Hague!" *

"Bravo, cousin, bravo!" cried Henry of Orange. "You flee from danger and escape from temptation. That is to be called heroism, and herewith you have as truly conquered a citadel as when I vanquished Breda!"

"Believe me too, cousin," said Frederick William, while he leaned upon the Prince's heroic breast—"believe me, that this victory has cost much blood and many tears."

One moment he let his head rest on the shoulder of his fatherly friend, then proudly drew himself up.

"Baron Leuchtmar and you, my trusty private secretary, Müller!" he cried, with loud voice, "to-day we leave The Hague and proceed to Arnheim, and thence we set forth to-morrow on our journey home. Marwitz, you travel in advance. The golden days of our youth are past! Let iron ones follow! I am prepared for all!"

* The precise words of the Electoral Prince. See C. D. Küster, The Remarkable Youth of the Great Elector, p. 39.

BOOK III.

I.—New Plans.

"Strange, very strange," muttered Count Adam Schwarzenberg to himself. "The Prince must have set out on his journey four weeks ago, and still no news from Gabriel Nietzel! The journey by sea, it is true, offered no opportunity for any enterprise, and the Electoral Prince had the sublime fancy of choosing the water in preference to the land route, in spite of the severities of this season of the year. But, according to the Prince's scheme of traveling, and acording to my own calculations, the Prince must have reached Hamburg full eight days ago, and as he was only to stay there three days, he must already have been journeying five days by land, and yet have I in vain looked for any tidings whatever from Gabriel Nietzel. Could it be possible that this man has dared to disobey me? —could he have carried his folly so far as to sacrifice wife and child rather than execute my commands?"

Gloomily the count's brow wrinkled, as he asked himself this question, and his eyes flamed with fury. With folded arms he walked rapidly to and fro.

"To think that all my plans may be wrecked by the pangs of conscience of a single fool!" he sighed—"to think, that for months, nay, for years, I have been laboring in vain to see the realization of these projects, and that in my highest, proudest aims I am dependent upon a blockhead, who—— What is it Daniel? What is your errand?"

"Pardon me, your excellency; some one is without who desires most urgently to speak with you."

"Who is it?—do you know him?"

"No, my lord count, I do not know him, and he will not

tell what he wants of your excellency. He says he must speak with your lordship himself, and I must only announce his name. It is Gabriel Nietzel."

"Gabriel Nietzel!" cried the count. "Why did you not tell me so directly, you fool! Bring him in without delay, and take care that no one disturbs us so long as the painter Gabriel Nietzel is with us."

The lackey hurried off, leaving the door open for the painter, whom he fetched in from the first antechamber. Breathlessly, in violent excitement, Count Schwarzenberg looked toward this open door. "It is my future fate that is about to enter," he murmured. "Ah, there he is! There is Gabriel Nietzel!" And in his vehement agitation he rushed forward a few steps to meet the painter, whom he saw approaching through the entrance hall. But forcibly constraining himself to an appearance of moderation and reserve, he stood still and assumed a calm, unimpassioned expression. Gabriel Nietzel entered, and behind him the lackey gently closed the door. The sharp eyes of the count rested inquiringly upon the newcomer, who remained standing near the door with head sunk and humble, melancholy mien. This submissive, contrite silence on the part of the returning painter was sufficiently eloquent to the mind of the count. It told him that Gabriel Nietzel had nothing welcome to communicate. He subdued his rage and proudly threw back his head, as if to shake off, like troublesome insects, all his disappointed hopes.

"Well, you are actually at home again, Master Court Painter!" he cried, in a tone that was well-nigh cheerful.

"Yes, your excellency," whispered Gabriel, with downcast eyes, "here I am again, and report myself forthwith to your excellency."

"To me?" asked Schwarzenberg, affecting astonishment. "Why do you report yourself to me, and what have I to do with you, Sir Court Painter Gabriel Nietzel? You should have gone to the palace, to the Electress, and gladdened her heart with your pleasing intelligence. I doubt not that you are the bearer of glad tidings for her, and come to forewarn her of the Prince's speedy arrival here in safety and good health?"

"I had no wish to go to her highness the Electress," said

Gabriel Nietzel humbly. "She knows already, independently of any information from me, that the Electoral Prince is safe and sound. I come to your excellency to excuse myself for the failure of my undertaking, and to beg your pardon."

"I do not understand you at all, Sir Court Painter," replied Count Schwarzenberg, shrugging his shoulders. "I know not what sort of undertaking you had in view, what you have failed in, and what I can have to pardon you for."

"Your excellency!" cried Gabriel with an outburst of grief —"your excellency, I swear that I am innocent, that it has been the result of no ill will, no negligence, but because I really could not find an opportunity for carrying out what——"

"Well, carrying out what?" asked Schwarzenberg, when Gabriel faltered. "What do I care for your unfinished works, your abortive schemes? I only buy finished pictures, and, if they are well executed and successes, I pay for them in kingly style. With daubers, though, and wretched copyists who would pass off copies as originals, I have nothing to do. Speak not to me, then, Sir Court Painter, of your sketches and designs. I ask nothing about them, but only come to me when you have a completed work to exhibit."

"Your excellency will not understand me," said Gabriel, while drops of agony trickled from his cold brow.

"No," proudly retorted the count, "it is for you to understand *me*, Sir Court Painter Gabriel Nietzel. Were you not sent to The Hague to complete your studies there? Why have you returned home so soon?"

"Because I was homesick, most gracious sir—because I longed inexpressibly after my child, my wife!"

The painter ventured to lift his eyes with earnest anxiety and entreaty to the face of the count, but Schwarzenberg's glance remained cold.

"Ah, you have a wife?" he asked, with indifference. "You left her behind and went alone to The Hague?"

"Yes, I went there quite alone, because I had a great and important work to accomplish there; but before I had even stretched my canvas and sketched the outlines, an unexpected hindrance interposed which annihilated all my plans."

"What sort of hindrance?" asked the count carelessly,

while he played with the heavy golden chain about his neck, to which was attached the portrait of the Elector set in brilliants. "What sort of hindrance?"

"The Electoral Prince, to whom the Electress had recommended me, and who received me into the number of his attendants, suddenly and unexpectedly determined to take his departure from The Hague, and straightway carried his resolution into effect. He himself, together with Baron von Marwitz, Baron Leuchtmar von Kalkhun, secretary Müller, and his chamberlain repaired forthwith to Amsterdam, in order to take ship there. He, however, ordered his major-domo and myself to break up his household, to pack up his books and paintings, and to journey with them by land to Berlin. I ventured to protest against this, and even preferred the request to be permitted to accompany the Electoral Prince upon his sea voyage; this, however, Baron Leuchtmar refused, and nobody was allowed to speak with the Electoral Prince himself. Up to the time of his departure he remained shut up in his chamber, and only left it to get into the carriage which conveyed him to Amsterdam. There, as was known, lay a passenger vessel ready to sail for Hamburg, and in this the Electoral Prince took passage."

"And you did not see the Electoral Prince at all before he set out?"

"Oh, your excellency, I had ranged myself along with all his other household officers at the side of his traveling carriage, and the Prince very condescendingly held out his hand to me, yes, he even tried to smile. 'Gabriel Nietzel,' he said, 'make all speed to reach Berlin right soon. I shall desire my mother to allow you to enter my special service, and then you shall paint for me many a pretty picture. Until then, farewell!' He once more nodded kindly to me, and jumped into the carriage."

"That is the only time that you have spoken at all to the Electoral Prince?"

"No, your honor, on the very day of my arrival I had an audience with him, and the Electoral Prince was highly delighted to receive news from home. I must tell him everything in detail, and since, with your gracious permission, I claimed

to side with your lordship's opponents, the Electoral Prince immediately became very confidential and affectionate to me, receiving me into his house and retinue, and promising to present me at the courts of the Stadtholder and the Queen of Bohemia."

"How came it, then, that the Prince so immediately afterward suddenly took the resolution to depart?"

"Most gracious sir, four-and-twenty hours after myself the Chamberlain von Marwitz arrived at The Hague, and had a long conversation with the Electoral Prince. Immediately after that the Electoral Prince gave orders for departure, and three hours later had already left The Hague."

"Now it seems, therefore, that Baron von Marwitz is a very persuasive speaker, who well understood how to move the Electoral Prince's heart, and to lead him back to obedience to his father and—myself. I shall therefore prove my gratitude to Herr von Marwitz. I like very much to have my orders and commissions executed punctiliously and exactly, and this Herr von Marwitz has done, for I had bidden him to leave no means untried whereby the Electoral Prince might be induced to leave Holland."

A crushing glance from his large gray eyes as he uttered these words fell full upon Gabriel Nietzel's pale and contrite face, making his heart quake with undefined dread.

"Your honor is very angry with me?" he asked faintly.

"You?" exclaimed the count in astonishment. "Why should I be angry with you? What have I to do with you? I only know you as the painter Nietzel, who sold me a copy for a good original, and whom I could therefore have condemned to the gallows as a falsifier and cheat. But you know I have forgiven you, and let your copy be valued as an original. I even went further in my magnanimous forgiveness; I had even intrusted you with commissions for Holland, where you were to visit the picture galleries in order to make copies. You have not executed my commissions, for you have returned home too soon. That is all, and therefore all connection between us is dissolved. Farewell, Mr. Court Painter Gabriel Nietzel; you are dismissed!"

He haughtily motioned to the door, turned his back upon

the painter, and slowly traversed the apartment. But Gabriel Nietzel did not go. There he stood as if rooted to the spot, and stared fixedly at the count, who walked to and fro, as if lost in thought, and seemed to be wholly unconscious that the painter had dared still to remain in his presence. After a long pause his eye fell quite accidentally on the spot where Gabriel Nietzel stood, and he started as if in sudden terror.

"Why, you still here?" he asked. "You dare to brave me? To terrify me with your dull, pale face? Have you grown deaf, Mr. Court Painter? Did you not hear me dismiss you?"

"I heard, but your honor knows that I can not go. Your lordship well knows that from your lips I await the sentence which is to seal my whole future fate, and that I will not leave this room until I have received this."

"How? You will not leave this room. You will stay although I have bidden you go? Very well, then, I shall call my servants and have you put out."

And already the count's hand was stretched forth to take his silver whistle. But Gabriel Nietzel dared to grasp this hand and hold it firmly between both his own.

"Pity, gracious sir, pity!" he pleaded. "Drive me from your presence, take from me the pension you most condescendingly insured to me; I feel that I am indeed undeserving of your favor and graciousness. Only, for pity's sake, for humanity's sake, restore to me my own—give me my wife and child!"

"What have I to do with your wife and child?" asked Count Schwarzenberg angrily. "Have you handed them over to me? Am I the chief of an asylum for deserted women and children?"

"My wife, Sir Count, give me back my wife!" cried Gabriel Nietzel, sinking down upon his knees.

"I know nothing about her, I have never seen her," said the count.

"You do know about her, your excellency! You took her and my dear, precious child under your protection when I went to The Hague. You had my wife and child carried to Spandow, and gave them an abode within your palace there."

"Now I see plainly that you speak like a deranged man, Master Gabriel Nietzel," cried the count passionately. "Collect your faculties, man, or I shall immediately have you arrested and sent to a madhouse. I repeat, collect your faculties, and utter not such palpably idle tales. Very likely that I should have taken your wife and child into my keeping. Bethink yourself, Master Gabriel Nietzel, be rational, and remember that you are happily unincumbered and a free bachelor!"

"No, no, I am not free!" shrieked Gabriel Nietzel. "I have a wife, I have a child, and see them again I must! Deliver them up to me, Sir Count. I beseech you by all that is sacred —deliver them up to me! I must have my wife and boy again!"

"Well then, go and look for them," said Schwarzenberg composedly "Apply to the police, and furnish them with a description of both their persons. Show your marriage license and your child's certificate of baptism, that every one may be convinced of the truth of your deposition. Then write a description of your wife, or, as you are a painter, draw a likeness of her, publish her name and family, call upon her relatives to render you their assistance, and in that way, if you really have a wife, you will in the end succeed in discovering her."

"Sir Count, you well know that I can not do so," groaned Gabriel Nietzel. "You well know that I am a poor, ruined man, entirely in your power. I beseech you, have mercy upon me! Restore to me my wife and child, and I will do all that you require of me. Give me back my wife, and I swear to you that I will do here what I was to have done on the journey. I swear to you that I will make good what I missed, that I——"

"I do not believe your oaths, Gabriel Nietzel," interposed the count. "You are liberal with your oaths and promises, but come short in deeds, in performances. Nobody will pay for a picture before he has seen it, or at least a sketch of the same. Therefore take yourself off, devise a plan, sketch your outline, and bring it to me. If it pleases me, and is practicable, if I see that you are zealous and well disposed, then will I gladly aid you in its execution and pay you in princely style. That is my last word, Master Court Painter Gabriel Nietzel, and now go, and do not show your face here again until you can show me

that sketch. You have understood me, have you not, Master Gabriel Nietzel? I bespeak a picture, and you are to furnish me with a sketch of it; then, as you are in want, I shall gladly pay you for it in advance."

"Yes, I have understood your lordship," said Gabriel Nietzel, heaving a deep sigh. "I know a subject for the painting you have ordered, and will make a sketch of it. You shall not have to wait long for it."

"It is a fine subject," said Schwarzenberg quietly. "We might call it the murder of Julius Cæsar."

"No, it is the execution of the Emperor Conrad III—the execution and murder of the last Hohen-Hohenstaufen," sobbed the painter, while tears fell in clear streams from his eyes.

"I believe another paroxysm of insanity has seized you," said the count contemptuously. "How can any one weep merely because he will represent a tragic scene? What is the last of the Hohenstaufens to you? You depict his death, and if the painting is a success I shall reward you handsomely for it, give you a splendid income, and then you can go to Italy, the home of all artists, to spend the remainder of your life there in pleasure and freedom."

"It shall be just as your excellency says," sighed Gabriel. "Only, your excellency, only be so gracious as to give me back my wife and child."

"I said so, your paroxysm of madness is coming on afresh!" cried Schwarzenberg, shrugging his shoulders. "Man, are you really beside yourself?—have you lost your senses? Do you demand your wife and child of me, of Count Adam von Schwarzenberg, the Stadtholder in the Mark? Go away with your follies. Be off, so that you can make your sketch, and when you come back, and it is good, you will perhaps find me inclined to answer all your silly questions for you!"

"Sir Count, oh, for God's sake, let me at least see my Rebecca once more!"

"Rebecca! your wife's name is Rebecca? Why, that really sounds as if she were a Jewess. And you say that she is your wife? Ah, repeat that again, then name the priest who celebrated your nuptials and united a Christian to a Jewess! By

——! I shall bring this evildoer to a strict account, and he shall be degraded from his office as a criminal and blot upon the Church, for he has sinned against God, the Church, and his Sovereign! Gabriel Nietzel, name the priest who married you to a Jewess!"

"I can not name him," murmured Nietzel, almost inaudibly. "Sir Count, I will be obedient and diligent in your service. I am a wretched sinner, and must expiate my crime. I shall do penance, too, and will be nothing more than a tool in your hands. Only have mercy upon me. Let me at least see my wife and child, if I may not speak to them! I only wish to see them, in order to gain courage and strength for my difficult and dangerous undertaking."

The count reflected for a moment, his eyes fastened upon Gabriel Nietzel's countenance, whose imploring, anxious expression seemed to touch him.

"I have in my house at Spandow," he said, after a long pause, "a beautiful painting by Albrecht Dürer. It was, unfortunately, a little injured in the transportation, and you shall restore it for me. To-morrow morning repair to Spandow, and ask for me. I shall be there, and will myself put the painting in your charge. Perhaps you will see there another painting besides, which will please you, and which, perhaps, is not unknown to you."

Gabriel Nietzel took the count's proffered hand, and with joyful impatience pressed it to his lips.

"Sir Count, I will be your servant, your slave, your creature. I will damn my soul for you and suffer the torture of perpetual flames if you will only give back to me my wife and child!"

"Master Court Painter," said Schwarzenberg, parodying his words, "I shall make you a rich and distinguished man. I shall send you to Italy, and you will enjoy the heavenly fires of the Italian sky, if you will only bring me the sketch ordered, and prove to me that you are in earnest as to its execution."

Gabriel Nietzel laughed aloud in the joy of his heart.

"Your highness shall not have long to wait. I will very soon have the sketch at your excellency's disposal."

"We shall see," said the count, with a slight nod of his

head. "And now that we have understood one another, and you have somewhat recovered your reason, now for the last time I tell you, you are dismissed!"

Gabriel Nietzel bowed low, and strode through the apartment toward the door of entrance, reverentially going backward that he might not turn his back upon the high-born, all-powerful count. He had almost reached the door, when it was opened and a valet appeared, who announced in a loud voice:

"His honor Count John Adolphus von Schwarzenberg!"

"My son!" exclaimed the count. "He has returned? Where is he? Where?"

"His honor has just gone to his apartments to divest himself of his traveling clothes, but with your highness's permission he will be here in a few minutes."

"Tell the count, that I expect him with impatience," cried the father. The valet hurried out, and Gabriel Nietzel was in the act of following him, when Schwarzenberg called him back.

"Do not go out that way now," he said; "my son is coming, and it is not worth while for him to see you. Go through yonder door. It leads to a corridor, and there you will find a small staircase by which you can descend to the court. Go!"

II.—Count John Adolphus von Schwarzenberg.

"I think I have distressed and tormented him enough," said the count to himself; "he will devise some means of gratifying my wishes, and in his despair will risk everything in order to obtain his wife and child. It is well that men have hearts, for they supply the most convenient handles for seizing hold of them and managing them. And for that reason men without susceptible hearts always become rulers, conquerors. Therefore have I become great and powerful, and will ascend yet higher, grow yet more mighty, for I, thank God! I have no heart! I have never been a victim to the silly vagaries of

an enamored heart, never made a fool of myself for any woman; never have I felt my heart moved by any other desire than that of attaining a pre-eminent position and becoming a great man. Such I have become, but I would mount yet higher, and in this —in this that enamored fool Gabriel Nietzel shall assist me."

The count grew suddenly silent, and looked toward the door. In the antechamber he had heard the sound of a voice familiar and grateful to his ears, a voice which awakened in his breast a rare and unwonted feeling of joy and happiness.

"My son," he murmured, "yes, it is my son. I really believe that I have a heart at last, for I feel it beat higher just now, and feel that it is a happiness to have a son!"

He hastily crossed the room, and had almost reached the door, when it suddenly opened and revealed the presence of a tall and slender young man, dressed in the elegant Spanish garb, such as was worn at the court of the German Emperor Ferdinand III.

"Father, dear father!" he cried, with a voice full of tenderness, and with outstretched arms he sped toward his father to press him to his heart. Count Adam von Schwarzenberg smilingly submitted, and an infinite feeling of satisfaction penetrated his whole being under the warm pressure of his only son's embrace. But only one short instant did he yield to this sensation, for he was ashamed of his weakness, and gently extricated himself from his son's arms.

"Here you are again, you gadabout and rover!" he said; but he could not subdue the brighter glistening of his eyes, as they fastened themselves upon his son's handsome, spirited, and youthful face.

"Yes, here I am again, *cher et aimable père*," exclaimed the young man, laughing; "but you do me great injustice by calling me a gadabout and rover, for, indeed, I have only traveled on most serious and proper business, and it strikes me that I am vastly to be feared and honored in my capacity of imperial treasurer and member of the Aulic council."

"What?" cried Count Adam joyfully, "the Emperor has conferred upon you such a high favor and honored you with such lofty titles?"

The young count nodded assent. "In me he has honored

my father's son," said he, "and distinguished me out of veneration and respect for you."

"You are far too modest, my son," cried the count, smiling. "What the Emperor Ferdinand has done for you he did not for your father's son, but in deference to your own merits."

"Please, oh please, let us talk no more on the subject," said the young man. "You will not succeed in altering my opinion, especially as I had it from the exalted mouth of his Imperial Majesty himself, that he gladly distinguished the son of so noble, gifted, and faithful a servant as Count Adam Schwarzenberg had ever been to the imperial house, and in consideration thereof bestowed upon him the dignity of imperial treasurer, and nominated him independently of individual merit a member of the Aulic council. I beg you to observe, my noble and highly deserving count, that your son has fallen heir to his honors without individual merit, whence it naturally follows that I am a worthless treasurer, and wholly devoid of merit as a member of the Aulic council."

"Well," laughed his father, "then I must console you with this, Adolphus, that you are besides that my coadjutor in my office of Grand Master of the Knights of St. John, and that I entertain the fixed determination of soon seeing you share with me the Stadtholdership of the Mark."

"I assure you, I need no consolation whatever!" cried Count Adolphus Schwarzenberg. "I am your son, and that is as much as if I were the fair Danaë, and had a shower of gold perpetually poured out upon me."

"You would deceive me," said Count Adam, gently shaking his head. "You would have me believe that you are satisfied with being my son, and have no personal ambition for yourself."

"It is no deception, *cher père*," laughed the young man. "I really do not give myself the trouble to have personal ambition beforehand. I behold my much-loved father standing in the sunshine of renown, and I quite composedly allow a few stray beams from his splendor to alight upon myself. I would not say, though, that I am wholly devoid of ambition. I only avoid talking about it till the time comes."

"My son, the time is come," said Count Adam quickly.

"Yes, the time for ambition is come with you, too, and to-day we must discuss it at length. But first tell me what news do you bring me from Vienna? Come, let us sit down, and confer with one another like two grave politicians and diplomatists." He took his son's arm and led him toward the divan.

"God forbid, Sir Stadtholder, that I, a mere tyro in diplomacy and politics, should venture to seat myself at your side," cried Count Adolphus. "No, father, I know my place, and you must indeed permit me to take my station at a reverential distance from you."

He took one of the little gold-embroidered footstools which stood near the divan and seated himself opposite his father. Count Adam looked upon him with a proud yet gentle smile, and seemed to have his own pleasure in his son's handsome and imposing appearance.

"I should like to know whether you resemble me," he said thoughtfully; "I should like to know whether I was ever such a lively, jovial young man."

"You are more than that, most respected father," cried his son; "you were handsome and possessed of irresistible attractions. I know that, for you are still so."

"So, it seems that my son has learned to flatter at the imperial court!"

"No, no; I speak the truth, and I swear that every one who has the good fortune to be admitted to your presence will confirm my testimony. You understand the art of fascinating men, and once let any one love you, then you can never be forgottten. The Emperor Ferdinand spoke of you with genuine admiration, and Princess Lobkowitz assured me that you were the only man whom she had ardently and truly loved. And yet they say that Princess Lobkowitz has had many admirers and still has."

"Princess Lobkowitz!" repeated Count Adam thoughtfully—"how fine that sounds, Princess Lobkowitz! Yet I well remember the time when Lobkowitz was quite a poor, inconsiderable count, who esteemed himself peculiarly happy when I lent him some of my pocket money, which, by the bye, I never saw again. We were both at that time pages at the court of Emperor Ferdinand I, and swore eternal friend-

ship. But how vain are such oaths! I afterward left the imperial court and came to the court of Cleves, and thence here to Prussia. I have restlessly labored, and may well say that I have wielded the helm of state in this country for twenty years, and—am still nothing but plain Count Schwarzenberg! The little, insignificant Count Lobkowitz, on the other hand, has now become a Prince through the Emperor's favor, as have also Eggenberg, Liechtenstein, and Fürstenberg."

"You shall be a Prince, too, father," said Count Adolphus softly. "Yes, without doubt, you have only to hint your wish to receive the title of Prince, and the Emperor Ferdinand will gladly remunerate you in that way, if he first sees his own desires fulfilled through you."

The count started, and cast an inquisitive, questioning look upon his son. "I thank you, Adolphus," said he, "you have led back our conversation, or rather, my lord treasurer, our conference, to the subject in point, in a manner as tender as diplomatic. Yes, the question is, first of all, to learn what news you bring for me from his Majesty, and what orders the Emperor has to give me."

"First of all, *cher père*, the Emperor wishes that every possible obstruction be interposed to prevent the Electoral Prince's marriage with the Princess of the Palatinate, and that, if practicable, the Electoral Prince be deterred from forming any matrimonial connection. It would greatly complicate affairs if the Electoral Prince should chance to have offspring soon, and thereby outwardly give more firmness and durability to the house of Brandenburg."

The count's eyes flashed upon his son's countenance, which still preserved its placid, innocent expression. "Who told you that?" said he. "Who spoke such strange, mysterious words? Not the Emperor, no, he can not have said that!"

"No, but the Emperor's most confidential adviser, *mio padre amato*, the venerable father confessor and Jesuit, Signor Silvio. By the way, I regard him as a man turned serpent, and would avoid exposing a shoeless heel to him. But one thing is certain, that he has the Emperor's ear not only in the confessional, but in the council chamber as well, and what he

says is just as good as if the Emperor himself said it. For the rest, they affirm at the imperial court that he is a sorcerer, and can look through men's eyes straight into their hearts and decipher what is therein as plainly and distinctly as if it was written on parchment in German text."

"I believe it is so," murmured the count. "I believe he has read into my heart, too. But further, further, my son! What more did Father Silvio say to you?"

"He spoke much of the weak and uncertain condition of the Electoral house of Brandenburg, which he said rested upon only two lives, and would be extinct if the Electoral Prince Frederick William should perish by a sudden death."

The count started, and a gray pallor overspread his face. His son, absorbed in his own discourse, observed it not and continued: "I ventured meanwhile to differ from the wise father, and reminded him that seven cousins and blood relations were still in existence, to give permanence to the Elector's family, and thereby lessen very greatly the weakness of the Brandenburg-Hohenzollerns. But Father Silvio smiled almost compassionately at this remark of mine, and said in a tone of lofty superiority: 'Young man, your father will be a better judge of this;' only repeat my words to him: that the Emperor will not admit the claims of the collateral branches of the Electoral house, and if unfortunately the Electoral Prince of Brandenburg should die without descendants, he will consider the Electoral Mark as an unincumbered fief, which the Emperor of Germany, in the plenitude of his power and as an act of free grace, might bestow on another prince.'"

Count Adam Schwarzenberg sprang up, and for a moment his eyes rested with a penetrating expression upon his son's countenance. Then he turned and began to move violently to and fro. Now it was his son's turn to fix his eyes piercingly upon *him*. When the count turned again, however, there was no trace of excitement visible on the young man's countenance, and with a friendly smile he looked at his father. Count Adam stepped close up to him, and laid his hand on his son's shoulder.

"You did not remind wise Father Silvio, then," he asked,

"that the Elector George William has, besides his son, two daughters? That there are two Electoral Princesses—Charlotte Louise and the young Sophy Hedwig?"

"No, father," replied Count Adolphus carelessly, "no, I did not. I deemed that superfluous, because in the Brandenburg Electoral house women have no right to the succession. The Salic law exists here, does it not?"

"As if laws could not be altered!" cried Count Adam. "As if the Emperor were not here to give new laws! My son, let us speak openly and candidly to one another, and answer me one question: On what terms are you with the Princess Charlotte Louise?"

The young man started, and for a moment a deep blush suffused his cheeks. "I do not understand you, father. What do you mean? On what terms should I be with the Princess?"

"John Adolphus, you understand me well enough, and know what I mean," returned Count Schwarzenberg smiling. "When I ask on what terms you are with the Princess Charlotte Louise, I mean by that, what progress have you made in her good graces?"

An almost imperceptible smile flitted across the young count's visage. "Well," he said, "the ladies of the Electoral house have ever been most condescending in their manner to me, Princess Charlotte Louise no less than her mother and sister, and, as I have done nothing to forfeit their favor, I hope that upon my return they will receive me as graciously as they dismissed me before I left home."

"My son," said Count Adam seriously, "you answer me evasively, and that is not well. We two are made to support each other, and to go hand in hand in the difficult path which lies before us. For you know as well as I do that our safety is imperiled when the Electoral Prince again makes his appearance at court, and we will henceforth find many stones of stumbling in our way."

"But my wise and puissant father will remove all such obstructions," cried the son, with a merry laugh. "Let the Electoral Prince throw ever so many stones in our way, we can pick them up, and your honor will find opportunity to hurl them back at the little Prince, the last scion of his house."

"I shall find opportunity, and, by heavens, I will make use of it."

"And if my gracious father can or will make use of me in picking up the stones, or maybe in throwing them, I am most heartily at his service. Your honor needs only to direct. I shall aim well, and hope to hit the mark."

"My son, verily, you are a great diplomatist," cried Schwarzenberg, "and many an one who esteems himself an old adept in this art might take lessons from you. How cleverly you managed to evade the question I put to you, and lead the conversation into a different channel! But I must recur to my question, and, since you will throw stones subject to my direction, then, my son, I tell you that your relations with the Princess Charlotte Louise may become a most effective missile against the Electoral Prince, which, if you aim it accurately, may inflict a deadly blow upon the Prince. Therefore, my fine son, answer my question honestly: On what terms are you with the Princess Charlotte Louise?"

A cloud of displeasure flitted across the young count's lofty and open brow, and his cheerful countenance became overshadowed with gloom.

"My God!" he said, "what on earth has the Princess to do with politics?"

"A great deal, my son. Let me remind you of Father Silvio's words, which you yourself reported to me. The father had me informed that in case of the Electoral Prince's dying without heirs, his Majesty would not recognize the claims of the other branches of the house of Brandenburg, but would consider the Electoral Mark as a vacant fief, which he might bestow elsewhere as matter of favor. The simplest and most natural thing will be, if there is no longer any son living, to pass the right of succession to the daughter, and for the Emperor to declare the eldest daughter of the Elector George William rightful successor, and to transmit the Electoral Mark Brandenburg to herself and her husband as an act of grace."

"Those are very great and very far-seeing plans," murmured the young man, with downcast eyes.

"But plans which may be realized," interposed his father

hastily—"plans which you have very maturely weighed in your prudent brain, for—I shall answer my own question myself—for you are on very good terms with Princess Charlotte Louise. You have calculated very wisely and very correctly. The Princess loves you, and may bring you an electorship as a bridal gift."

"God forbid that I should play a criminal game with the Princess's heart!" cried Count Adolphus, in tones louder and more energetic than he had yet employed. "You accuse me falsely, most gracious sir. It has never come into my mind to speculate on such a bridal gift, or to make of love a calculation."

Count Adam gazed with an expression of painful astonishment upon the excited countenance of his son. "Unhappy boy, you love the Princess, then?" he asked.

"Yes," exclaimed the young man vehemently—"yes, I love her! I should love her were she a simple village maiden. I should seek to win her were she of obscure and humble parentage, if she could present me with nothing but her heart, her affectionate nature, her charming self. Learn now, father, on what terms I stand with the Princess: I love her, love her passionately!"

"Ah, my son, how well this enthusiasm becomes you!" said his father. "How happy the Princess would be if she could see you with those fiery glances flashing from your large bright eyes! My son, you will surpass me, for you have one great advantage over me, you have received from Nature a glorious endowment denied to me; you have a tender heart! You either feel glowing love or—maybe simulate, and act it to the life! We will not discuss this further; I only repeat it, you are destined to surpass me. You love the Princess Charlotte Louise! I thank you for this one confession, but add to it a second, Adolphus. Tell me whether the Princess returns your love?"

"I have not ventured to put this question to her," replied Count Adolphus, with downcast eyes. "The Princess is so high above me, is so pure and virtuous, that it would be a sin to tempt her innocence and virtue by the avowal of an unsanctioned love!"

"My son!" exclaimed the count, smiling, "you are a pattern of discretion and modesty. You amaze, you delight me. You have not ventured, and will not venture to declare your love to the Princess?"

"No, father, at least, not so long as it is an unsanctioned love—so long as I do not know whether it has your approval, and through you the Elector's."

"You would step surely, you would engage in no undertaking that does not promise good results! Ah, I understand now—I comprehend all now. I have an irresistible desire to embrace you, and I know you will pardon your father for this one ebullition of tenderness. Come to my heart, my great, my admirable son!"

He flung his arms around his son's neck and imprinted a warm kiss upon his lips.

"Count John Adolphus Schwarzenberg," he said then, "with this kiss I give you my consent to woo the Princess Charlotte Louise! With this kiss I promise so to work upon and bend the Elector's heart, that he will give you the Princess's hand, and agree to your union."

"My dear father, you open indeed to me the gate of paradise. But this gate has two wings, and if I would gain admittance, both wings must open to me."

"Oh, you mean the Electress? She will certainly be very much opposed to such a union, for she has a proud and willful heart, over which no one has any influence except the Electoral Prince, and he, indeed, will not use his influence in our behalf. Well, there is nothing for it but to oppose force to force, and to constrain the dear lady to give her consent. To employ such coercive measures is your affair, my son!"

"You empower me to do so, father? You will not refuse me your support? You will not disavow my acts?"

"I empower you to do everything you think needful, and you will find me a faithful ally, for I recognize joyfully in you my trusty coadjutor, and see that we may count upon each other."

"I shall ever esteem it a sacred and delightful duty to obey you, my much-loved father, and I shall joyfully hold myself ready to carry out your wishes."

"And you will do well in this, my son," said Count Adam Schwarzenberg, with a hearty pressure of the hand. "All that I do for myself is also done for you, all that I obtain is for your profit and advantage. You are my heir, to you will descend all my earthly possessions, my name, my renown, my dignities and offices, my money and estates."

"*Cher père*," cried the young man, "let us not speak of such solemn things. I hope that it will be a long time yet ere I enter upon that great and sad inheritance."

"I hope so, too," said Count Adam, with animation of manner. "I would leave you *all* in perfect condition, and to effect this much labor is yet required. I have set myself a mighty task, and it is yet far from its accomplishment."

"And yet you have already conducted and executed matters so grandly, so admirably, father! You have no idea with what rapture they think of you and your performances at the imperial court. Emperor Ferdinand spoke of you as his most trusted and beloved servant, and Father Silvio called you a lamp of the faith and a faithful son of the Church, through whom many will yet be saved."

"Yes, many shall yet be brought within the ark of safety by my means!" cried Count Adam, in a lively manner. "I know what I purpose, I know the great aims after which I have striven for twenty years with intrepid spirit, with ardor never to be chilled. My son, with you I make no secret of my aims, and you must know them, that you may stand unflinching at my side. It is true, I am ambitious. I thirst for fame; it is true, I have labored for myself and forwarded my own personal interests as much as I could. My aims, however, are not restricted to these private interests, they are higher, nobler! I am the faithful servant and subject of my Emperor and lord; I am the believing and zealous son of our holy Church. To the Emperor and the Church belong the fruits of my striving and my energy, and to promote the greatness and consideration of both is the ultimate object of all my labors and all my schemes."

"And I, most gracious father, will take my station firmly at your side," said Count Adolphus fervently. "You will ever find in me an attentive pupil, eager to learn."

"We have both a great mission to fulfill," exclaimed Count Adam, "and it is well for us sometimes to place this clearly before our eyes, in order to be ever mindful of it, and never to forget it even in the pursuance of private ends. You, too, remember this, my son, and act accordingly. To the Emperor and the Church be all our services dedicated! To render the Emperor great and mighty, to strengthen his consideration throughout the German Empire, is and shall be my aim as a statesman. To extend continually the power and dominion of the Catholic religion is and shall be my task as a Christian, as a son of the Church, within whose pale alone is salvation. God himself has chosen me for his tool, else how would it have been possible that the bigoted, reformed Elector should have selected me for his first and mightiest minister? God wills that through me the influence of the Holy Roman See and the German Emperor be promoted and advanced; therefore has he caused me, the subject of the Emperor, an Austrian born, to become the servant of the Elector of Brandenburg. But the servant has become master, and the Catholic Austrian is Stadtholder in the Mark, the almighty minister in the land of the heretic. It is so, because through him this land is to be led back to the true faith and the Emperor, because through him is to be re-established the endangered supremacy of the Emperor of Germany! The Protestant Electors would have exalted themselves against the power of Emperor and empire; with the help of the Swedes they would have cut up the Holy Roman Empire into a number of free, independent States, great and small, where Protestants, Reformers, and Lutherans would have enjoyed as great consideration as the Catholics, and over which the Emperor would no longer have exercised control. The Protestant Elector of the Palatinate was to have been changed into a King, waving his scepter over Catholic Bohemia, and in place of the little Elector of Brandenburg was to have arisen a mighty Prince, who was to have broken the power of the German Emperor in the north, and become the chief and center of Protestant Germany! To that end were they leagued with the Swedes, to that end was King Gustavus Adolphus to have furnished help to his cousins and brothers-in-law. But the fates were against

them! In the battle of the White Mountain the Count Palatine lost his Bohemian throne, in the battle of Lützen the Swedish King his life, and in the peace of Prague the Swedes and other enemies of the Emperor a powerful ally in the Elector of Brandenburg! It was I who alienated the Elector from the Swedes, who made him again the obedient vassal of his Emperor and Sovereign. And it shall be I who will make the Mark Brandenburg imperialist again! For the limbs accommodate themselves to the head, and if the Prince acknowledges himself a professed Catholic, his subjects will soon follow suit."

"What! most gracious father, is it possible that the Elector George William——"

"Hush, hush, my son! who says anything about the Elector George William? Who thinks of the decaying tree, which can no longer bear fruit, when he beholds at its side a young, vigorous tree laden with blossoms, rich for future harvests? My son, I herewith give you my consent to woo the love of the Princess Charlotte Louise, but I make one condition which you must solemnly swear to respect: none but a Catholic becomes the wife of my son John Adolphus."

"None but a Catholic becomes my wife!" cried the young count. "I solemnly give you my oath to that effect, father."

"And you actually suppose that the Emperor will bestow upon me the same favor he has conferred upon Fürstenberg, Lobkowitz, and Liechtenstein?"

"I am empowered to promise it prospectively, most gracious sir. The house of Austria is grateful, and forgets not that already your father before you rendered her important services, attending the Emperor with credit in his wars against the Turks; that you yourself have been through a whole lifetime true and unswerving in your fidelity to the Emperor's service; that the Stadtholder in the Mark, and the Grand Master of the Order of St. John has been ever mindful of his duty to the Emperor."

"I must and shall be ever called a good Imperialist," cried the count warmly, "and prefer the Emperor's to the Elector's

service.* Bethlen Gabor, Prince of Hungary, has well said that the Elector and I are upon one ship, and that my fortune depends upon the Elector's fortune; but he shall be proved to have been in error, and we prefer making our voyage in our own little bark to take passage in the Electoral ship."

"Yes, father, that shall we!" cried the young count joyfully. "You sit at the helm and give management and direction to the boat. For my part, I shall so hoist and unfurl the sails that we catch the breeze and bound swiftly forward!"

"Do so, my son, and always heed the wind as it blows across from the apartments of the Electress and her princesses, as well as from the robber nests and dens of the squires and waylayers of the Mark, and from the fortresses and garrisons. We, too, my son, voyage together in the same boat; I am the pilot, you unfurl the sails, and upon our flag in mysterious and invisible colors is inscribed this device: Good Imperialists, good Catholics!"

"Yes, good Imperialists and good Catholics," replied the young count energetically. "But, dearest father, let us add besides, quite softly, good Schwarzenbergians!"

"Yes, my son, that will we. For, in addition to those great and holy interests, to keep one's own interests a little in view is manly and justifiable. My heavens! life would have been perfectly hateful and abominable in this dirty, cheerless Berlin if we had not seen above us a glittering star, to which we could look up when all was so dismal here below, which shone upon our path and cheered us when we feared to sink in the mud and mire. This star, my son, do you know its name?"

"Its name is Fame, its name is Love, *cher père*."

"Well, for the sake of fame I will put up with love, foolish dreamer. You may bring it on board our boat as ballast. But if a storm should come and necessity impel, we shall throw our ballast overboard."

"Dear father, if you do that, you will throw overboard likewise my happiness and life!" exclaimed Count Adolphus

* Count Adam Schwarzenberg's own words. *Vide* Droysen, History of the Prussian Policy, vol. iii, part 1, p. 35.

warmly. "If you call love ballast, then forget not, father, that in this ballast your son's heart is included."

"Enamored fool, you really have a heart? Do you believe so?"

"I believe so, most noble father, because I feel it, because——"

A hasty knock, thrice repeated, at the door of the antechamber interrupted him, and in obedience to the Stadtholder's summons, the lackey Balthasar hurriedly entered.

"Most gracious sir," he said, "it is a courier from the Commandant von Rochow at Spandow, who desires to speak with your lordship on most urgent business."

"I am going, most gracious father, I am going," cried the young count, speedily rising. "I can no longer lay claim to the Stadtholder's precious time."

"And you have very important affairs of your own to attend to, have you not?" asked his father. "You have been long enough diplomatist and politician, and that curious thing, whose possession you boast, the heart, will now assert its rights?"

The young man laughed and pressed the count's extended hand tenderly to his lips. Then he nodded once more affectionately to his father, and bounded lightly through the room to the side door, through which he vanished. Count Adam Schwarzenberg looked thoughtfully after his son. "Strange!" he murmured. "Is he acting a comedy, or is it truth? Does he prudently pretend to have a heart, or has he one in reality? Well, never mind. The courier from Spandow!"

In answer to the count's loud call a huntsman in dirty, dusty uniform made his appearance from the antechamber, and, making a military salute, remained standing near the door.

"What news have you for me?" asked Count Schwarzenberg, striding toward him. "Where are your letters and dispatches?"

"I crave pardon, your excellency, but I have no letters or dispatches. The Commandant von Rochow sent me with a verbal message, and entreats forgiveness in that haste allowed him no time for writing. I have only to announce that,

even at the instant of my departure, the Electoral Prince was making his solemn entry into Spandow. All ranks and conditions of people from the region round about had joined the Electoral Prince, and followed him, in carriages, on horseback, and on foot. The commandant was greatly amazed to witness so much pomp, and hastened to array himself in parade uniform in order to go and meet the Electoral Prince with his corps of officers."

"That is all you have to communicate to me?"

"All, your excellency."

"Then ride back again, and return to the commandant my warmest thanks for his welcome message."

"Yes," repeated the count, when the courier had taken leave, "yes, this is a welcome message and by ——! I shall derive profit from it."

"Ho, Balthasar, Balthasar! Is the commander of police in the antechamber?"

"Your highness, he has been there an hour already."

"Bid him come in. There you are, Master Brandt! Well, listen! Send all your secret friends and emissaries through the city, privately inform the citizens, the magistrates, the merchants, the whole inhabitants in a body, that the Electoral Prince will arrive here in from three to four hours, and that it would surely be a right great pleasure to the Elector and his wife if they would prepare him a public reception, and go a little way on the road to meet him. Say, moreover, that it would assuredly prepare a very great joy for the Electoral Prince if they would illuminate the city this evening, and if this were done voluntarily, and without suggestion, the Electoral Prince would be forced to admit how very glad the people of Berlin are to welcome him, and how much they hope for from his return. Excite the populace properly, that their houses be brightly illuminated, and that they may give great demonstrations of joy. Dispatch your agents everywhere, and show me to-day for once that you know how to execute my orders punctually, and are a worthy successor of my dear, recently deceased Dietrich, your predecessor in office."

"Your excellency, I shall do all that lies in my power, and I doubt not but that I shall succeed in deserving your honor's

approbation. I only venture to remark, that many of the citizens will find it exceedingly difficult to procure the candles or lamps needed for the illumination, for the poverty and distress are very great, and it would perhaps be well to aid the people and furnish them with the candles for illuminating."

"Do so, Master Brandt," cried the count, smiling. "I fully empower you to purchase tallow candles for distribution, to the amount of a hundred dollars; only, take care that the people actually light and burn them up, and do not consume them as dainties these hard times. And one thing more, Brandt! It would be pleasant to me if you would excite a few people against me and his highness the Elector, while you tell them various bad things about me, and attribute it as a crime to the Elector that he is so devoted to me. You might then urge on to the palace such people as you have stirred up and goaded, so that, as soon as the Electoral Prince arrives, they might shout with loud distinct voices: 'Long live the Electoral Prince! Long live our savior and deliverer! Down with the Catholics. Away with Schwarzenberg!' You can at least persuade ten or fifteen to do this, and promise them that they shall have money to buy a good drink if they shout right loudly and clearly. Well, why do you smile so all of a sudden, man?"

"Pardon me, your highness, but when I entered upon my office, four weeks ago, your excellency urged it upon me as a stringent duty to report truly to your honor, not only what happens, but what is the mood of the people here. Does this command always have validity, your excellency?"

"It has validity for the whole term of your service, Master Brandt, or, rather, you will only remain chief of police so long as I am convinced that you always report to me the full truth in all things, without reserve. Speak! What would you say?"

"Your highness, I would only say that it is not necessary to stir up the people to give utterance to such infamous and disrespectful outcries against your excellency. They will do so of their own accord, and if I should not pick up the first who raised such a cry, have him arrested, and carried off, then immediately would twenty fellows be found, without

any prompting from me, to shout exactly the words which your excellency would gladly hear."

"You mean the words: 'Away with the Catholics! Down with Schwarzenberg'?"

"I beg your honor's pardon, but those are the words I mean."

The count laughed clearly. "Well," he said, "so much the better! We will be spared then some trouble and expense, which is always a very pleasant thing. But hear, Sir Master of Police! If we let the fellows shout to-day, it does not follow that we shall not administer fitting punishment to-morrow. Mark the shouters very narrowly, and to-morrow, when the merriment is over, have them arrested and thrust into prison for a couple of weeks!"

The chief of police shrugged his shoulders. "I crave pardon, your excellency; that is no punishment for the rabble in these days. They are glad when they are put away at Oxenhead, or here in the castle prison, receiving food and lodgings free of cost, and many a one, who formerly lived in honor and affluence, would to-day be gladly found guilty of some fault, for the sake of being arrested and supported in prison at the expense of the state."

"Well, then we will not gratify the shouting mob by punishing them with imprisonment, but cause the jailer to administer a sound cudgeling to each one of them, and then let the fellows go again. Make good speed now, Brandt, for I expect the Electoral Prince here in a few hours, and if the people are not properly notified, he will make his entry before they have taken off their rags and donned their holiday attire. Make haste, and let us have this evening a right brilliant illumination. Farewell, Master Brandt!"

The chief of police departed, and by a loud whistle Schwarzenberg called the lackey to him.

"One of the grooms must take horse," was his command. "He must ride out on the road to Spandow about a quarter of a mile. There he is to halt, and wait until the Electoral Prince arrives with his attendants. As soon as he has seen him, he is to come back at full speed and make the announcement to me."

"All necessary preliminaries are arranged," said Schwarzenberg, when he found himself again alone. "Now let the Electoral Prince come on, we are ready to receive him. There will be a hard struggle, but I have been victorious over all my enemies for twenty years, and shall probably conquer the little Electoral Prince too! Now a hurried toilet, and then to the Elector, to open the skirmish in his neighborhood! Ah, we shall see, my young Prince! For you shouts the rabble of Berlin, for me speaks the Elector! We shall see which of us two has built upon the sand!"

III.—The Home-coming.

"May I be so bold as to come in, most noble sir?" asked Count Schwarzenberg, as he opened the door leading into the Electoral cabinet and thrust in his head, encircled by a hundred beautifully arranged curls.

"Behold, there is Adam Schwarzenberg!" cried Elector George William, wheeling his chair from the writing table. "Why do you ask, count, since you know that you are always privileged to enter unannounced? Come closer, and be heartily welcome!"

And the Elector leaned both his arms upon the wooden arms of his chair, making an effort to rise. But the count was at his side in a moment, gently forcing him back into his seat, while at the same time he half bent one knee and imprinted a kiss upon the Elector's right hand.

"If your grace treats me with such formality, and rises on my account, then I must believe that you love me no longer," he said, with soft, insinuating voice. "But you well know, beloved master, that I could not live without your love, and that existence itself would seem gloomy and dark to me if the star of your favor and love should cease to shine upon it."

"Live, my Adam, live merrily, then, and joyously, for you well know that I love you," replied George William, nod-

ding to the count in most friendly manner. "And how could it be otherwise, when I know that I can depend upon your love, and that you are the only one truly interested in my not being called away yet awhile, and in having me tarry a little longer upon earth. Come, my friend, sit down. Draw up your armchair close to my side—no, opposite to me, that I may look at you. I love dearly to behold your handsome, noble face, and then console myself with the thought that, after all, the Elector of Brandenburg can not be such a pitiful little Prince, since such a proud, distinguished lord as Count Schwarzenberg is his minister."

"Say his servant, his slave, his humble subject, most gracious sir! Yes, look at me, my much-loved master, and read in my countenance that I am devoted to you with my whole heart and soul. Ah! who knows how much longer you will read that in my face, and how soon it may come to pass that poor Adam Schwarzenberg will be thrust aside and no longer find a place in your heart! Oh, dearest sir, when I think of that, I feel perfectly wretched and inconsolable, and I would rather hide my head and weep and mourn, than go smilingly to meet the joyful countenance of him who will come to supplant me in your affections!"

"Nobody shall do that, Adam, and I know not, indeed, who could be bold enough even to attempt it."

"Most gracious sir, the Electoral Prince will attempt it! He who, when a mere little child, was my opponent. He, who has been brought up by his mother and other relatives to mistrust me. He will grudge me the smallest place in his father's heart, and will do everything to contest it with me!"

"But he will not succeed, be assured of that, my Adam, he will not succeed in it. I only know too well that in you I have a faithful, devoted servant, in the Electoral Prince a rebellious and refractory son; that with you all is bound up in my life; with him all in my death!"

"Oh, no, your highness, no, it is impossible that the Electoral Prince could be so heartless and degenerate as to wish for his father's death. No, I must take the part of the Electoral Prince against you. You accuse him falsely, most gracious sir; he surely loves you, and it is only his ambition and

youthful arrogance that sometimes lead him to do what is not right, and what surely he would not do if he only reflected better. Out of youthful presumption he undertook, despite your commands to the contrary, to remain longer at The Hague, and even to send back the Chamberlain von Schlieben, whom you had dispatched to him with strict orders to bring him home. And only his stormy, boundless ambition is at fault now in inducing him to appear here in rather an unbecoming manner. But you must not be angry with him for it, dear sir, and on that very account have I come to you today, to beg and implore you most earnestly not to admit any feelings of resentment into your mind this day, which is to restore to you the Electoral Prince."

"He is coming, then, at last?" cried the Elector, breathing again. "He has finally had the goodness to heed our oft-repeated commands, and condescended to return home? But this return is, as I feel, likely enough to prepare renewed vexation for me, and in your magnanimity you come to me only to sweeten a little the pill which my son gives me to swallow. Speak out openly, Adam, and keep back nothing! What is it? What has the Electoral Prince done?"

"Oh, your highness, I am convinced that he means nothing bad, and has no design of vexing you. He naturally rejoices greatly on his return to his future dominions, and consequently enjoys the congratulations of his future subjects, and gladly allows them to receive him with demonstrations of delight."

"Do they so, his future subjects?" inquired the Elector, and his hands, swollen by gout, grasped convulsively the arms of his easychair. "Do they welcome him with rejoicings as their future sovereign?"

"Yes, most gracious sir, it is plainly to be seen how closely the people cling to the electoral house of Hohenzollern, and how they sympathize in every fortunate event occurring in that family. From the moment that the Electoral Prince crossed the boundaries of the Mark, the inhabitants of every village and town have joyfully poured forth to meet him; his journey is a genuine triumphal procession, and the reigning Sovereign of the country could not be received

with more honor and delight than is the young Electoral Prince!"

"Me, their reigning Sovereign, me, they did not receive with rejoicings," exclaimed the Elector, whose face grew crimson with excitement and passion. "My journey was anything but a triumphal procession, resembling much more a funeral, so quiet and still was everything on my way. Nowhere did I hear a joyful welcome, nowhere did the people come forth to meet me, and as at Königsberg they permitted me to depart without greeting or acclamation, so here at Berlin they allowed me to enter without a sign of welcome or congratulation. I will now confess to you alone that I was much mortified by this, although I did not complain of it. I comforted myself by reflecting that the times were bad and depressing, and that in their afflictions the people could not even present a glad, cheerful countenance to the father of their country. But now it falls to my lot to hear that they *can* make merry and rejoice, and that they have only saved up the joy in their hearts to bestow it upon the return home of my son and heir."

"Pardon, your highness, but I believe that we accuse the poor people wrongfully if we imagine that they are now acting thus of their own free motion, when they were so quiet on the arrival of their beloved Sovereign. No, the poor, unhappy people would have been equally silent at this time if they had not been stirred up to make noisy demonstrations of joy, if they had not been paid for it. It is otherwise wholly incredible and not to be thought of that the populace should have prepared such a triumph for the young home-returning lord. It is plainly to be seen that all has been settled and arranged beforehand. For it is not merely the offscourings of the streets, but burghers, magistrates, and officials, who have extended a welcome to the Electoral Prince. At Spandow, for example, all the citizens, with the magistracy at their head, issued from the town to pay their respects to him—yes, even Commandant von Rochow has found it necessary to join in the universal rejoicings, and has ridden out with his officers in their dress uniforms to do honor to the Prince's arrival. Here at Berlin, too, your own residence, all is uproar and ex-

citement. They are putting on their holiday suits, and making ready to meet the Electoral Prince. That proves quite clearly that his speedy approach to the city has been already announced to the citizens, and communicated to the magistrates even before any tidings of the sort had reached your highness or myself, the Stadtholder in the Mark. For as soon as I obtained this intimation from Colonel von Rochow, I hastened hither to bring to your highness the glad news of your son's return home, and on the way I was stopped by whole crowds of festive men and women hastening to the suburb Spandow, to plant themselves near the Pomegranate Bridge and along the meadow dike.* Indeed, it strikes me that I even saw some gentlemen of municipal authority going the same way in full official dress."

"And you suffered this?" asked the Elector angrily. "You allowed them to prepare such an insult and affront as to do for the son what they have not found needful to do for the father? But I will not bear it; I shall not be humiliated by my own son. You are the Stadtholder in the Mark, you must provide against their offering me any cause of vexation. Send out your officers, Sir Stadtholder, to clear the streets of this gaping multitude, send the magistrates home, and order the people to remain quietly within their houses, to do their work and not to lounge about the streets."

"My much-loved lord and Elector, I sue for a favor in behalf of your most faithful servant, your poor Adam. I beg you out of consideration for me to retract these stringent orders, for I should be ruined if I were to execute them. Throughout the whole Mark, yea, throughout all Germany, they would raise the cry of murder against me, would everywhere blazon it, that Count Schwarzenberg is so inimically disposed toward the Electoral Prince that he would not even grant him an honorable reception on his return home after an absence of three years. Oh, most gracious sir, you will not

* Old Berlin extended no farther than the palace. Behind this was the park, and this was bounded by the walls of the citadel, with the moat beyond. The whole of Dorotheatown was then the electoral garden and arable land, which, however, lay uncultivated. *Vide* Nicolai, Description of Berlin and Potsdam, vol. i, pp. 33, 157.

increase yet more the number of my enemies and opposers, you will not excite public opinion yet more against me, and render it more favorably disposed to the Electoral Prince! If we now forcibly restrain these testimonials of pleasure on the part of the people, then will it be said that I misuse my power and am jealous of the Electoral Prince; that I am seeking to thrust him aside from his exalted position. If, on the other hand, it is seen how joyfully I acquiesce in the Electoral Prince's reception with acclamations everywhere, then will they be forced to acknowledge that it is not I who meet the young Prince with hatred, but that I willingly concede to him all honors and triumphs."

"It is true," muttered the Elector, "they would surely suspect and accuse you, and it would not mend matters to say that I myself gave orders that the Electoral Prince be allowed to come home quietly."

"God forbid that such a thing should be said!" cried Schwarzenberg. "No, rather let the whole world censure and condemn me—rather let it be said that I have acted as the spiteful and unworthy enemy of the Electoral Prince—than that they should dare even to cast one shadow upon my beloved master's heart. What matters it that they calumniate me, if they only venture not to attack and suspect your highness?"

"They shall not slander and suspect you, my Adam," said the Elector, offering him his hand. "For your sake let us suffer the Electoral Prince to come hither in triumph. But we will remember it against him, and our love for him will not be thereby increased."

"Yet I entreat your highness to receive your son kindly and graciously," pleaded Schwarzenberg with insinuating voice. "It is better, your highness, to try to chain him to you by goodness and love than by strictness and severity to repel him yet more, and force him to join the party of your opponents. It is a great and powerful party, and I well know that it is their plan to place the Electoral Prince at their head, and through him to attain their ends."

"And what are their ends?" asked the Elector, with lowering brow.

The count bent over closer to his ear, as if he feared letting even the walls hear what he had to say.

"Their ends are a transference of the government, and when this is effected a revolt from Emperor and empire, and a league with the Swedes and all Protestant German princes against Emperor and empire."

"The transference of the government? That means an insurrection, a revolution. They would hurl me from my throne and ensconce my son there?"

"They hope that in your distress you will do, gracious sir, what your blessed father did."

"Abdicate!" cried the Elector angrily. "Abdicate in favor of my son?"

"In favor of the Electoral Prince, who has grown up in Holland to become a promising Prince, a general of the future, a brilliant leader of the Protestant Church, and of whom his followers say that he will be a second Gustavus Adolphus!"

"A second plague—a second source of danger to myself!" screamed the Elector, striking with his clinched fist upon the arm of his chair. "It was not enough that my brother-in-law Gustavus Adolphus brought me into trouble and distress, and caused the Emperor's wrath to flame forth against me, so that I was really afraid that I would share the fate of my cousin the Margrave of Jägerndorf, whom the Emperor put under his ban, declaring that he had forfeited his margraviate, and giving it over as a feudal tenure to Prince Liechstenstein! I was only saved then from a like terrible fate by your intercession and fidelity! It was you who, by your address and eloquence, softened the Emperor's resentment against me, induced him to pardon me, and afterward brought about the peace of Prague, which reconciled the Emperor to me. Yet it was not enough to have gone through those times of anxiety and distress, they must be now renewed through my only son! In him am I to find a second Gustavus Adolphus, to plunge me into new perils and bring down upon me the Emperor's avenging wrath? But it shall not be—I solemnly swear, it shall not be! I will *not* involve my land in new dangers and calamities of war. I will *not* depart from my neutrality. I

will have peace—peace with the Emperor, peace for my poor people, and for their unhappy Prince! But I shall not act as my father did, and prepare a pleasure for my son by resigning sovereignty and rule in my lifetime and becoming the servant and subject of my own son! Before me shall he bow—me shall he acknowledge to be his lord so long as I live, and never while I breathe shall I cease to lay to his charge these hours of pain and vexation. I am Elector and ruler, and he is nothing further than my son and subject, my successor when I die, but not my coregent while I live! Count Adam Schwarzenberg, I charge you to stand courageously at my side, to remain zealous in my service, and to direct your attention especially to unraveling all the arts and wiles, the plots and schemes of my son and his abettors; to give me always information on these points, to keep nothing in the background, and not to conceal anything from me merely to save me from vexation. Will you promise and swear so to manage and act, my Adam?"

"I swear and promise it, and in affirmation will my Prince allow me to give him my hand upon it?" asked Schwarzenberg, laying his own right hand in the outstretched one of the Elector. "You will find in me a true servant and guardian of your sacred person and your throne, and he who would supplant or harm you must first step over the corpse of Count Schwarzenberg! But now, most gracious sir, I beseech you not to be overpowered by your feelings of indignation, and to be amiable and condescending toward the home-coming Electoral Prince; for it is sometimes very necessary to wear a mask and assume an appearance of harmlessness and unconcern in order the better to fathom the designs of one's enemies, and to make them feel secure, that they may the more easily betray themselves."

"Yes, I will do so," said George William, sighing. "I will swallow down my rage, although it would be a relief to me to vent it a little, and to show my son that I know him and am not deceived by him. But what noise is that without, and who is knocking so violently at the door?"

This door was now impetuously torn open, and the Electress Sophy Elizabeth entered, with beaming eyes and fea-

tures lighted up by joy, while on high she held an open letter in her hand.

"George!" she exclaimed—"George, our son is coming! Our dear Frederick William is coming!"

"Well, I rather think he ought to have been here a half year ago," growled the Elector, "and we have been expecting him several months already."

"But he is here now, my husband, he is actually here now. Only see what a good, affectionate son he is! He has halted at the inn of the Spandow suburb, merely to forewarn us of his arrival. It was not enough for him that he had sent us a messenger with a verbal communication, no, he must send us a written salutation, and such kind, cordial words as he has written. There, read, my husband, just read!"

She handed the paper to the Elector, but he did not take it.

"Is the letter directed to me?" he asked.

"No, to me, to his mother he wrote, because he knew how happy it would make me, and how heartily I love him. Read, George!"

"I never read letters that are not directed to myself," said the Elector, turning away.

"Well, then, I will read it to you!" cried the Electress, who in the fullness of her joy heeded as little the ill humor of the Elector as she did the presence of Count Schwarzenberg, who upon her entrance had modestly withdrawn to one of the deep window recesses. "Yes, I will read it to you," she repeated, "for you must hear what our son writes."

And with a voice trembling from joy and agitation she read:

"My gracious, revered Mother: Before I enter my dear birthplace and return home to my beloved parents and sisters, I would announce my arrival to your highnesses, that you may not be alarmed by my unexpected coming, and that I may not come inopportunely to his grace, my father. I enjoy greatly getting home, and all the testimonials of love and sympathy which I have received ever since I set foot within my father's territories, and they will remain indelibly

graven on my heart. I beg your grace to present my most submissive respects to my gracious father and Elector, and to speak a good word for me to him, that his grace may no longer cherish resentment against me on account of my long stay abroad, and that he may favorably incline toward and receive me, and be convinced that I am and shall ever remain the grateful and obedient son of my venerated parents.

"FREDERICK WILLIAM."

"Well," asked the Electress, "are not those affectionate, glorious words, and does not your fatherly heart rejoice in them? But just hear, hear, how they shout and hurrah! It is the good people of Berlin! They are coming to the palace to see our son!"

Again was the door through which the Electress had entered violently thrown open, and two young ladies entered. Their lovely and blooming faces beamed with happiness and their eyes glistened with joy.

"He comes! Our brother is coming!" they cried, rushing forward toward their parents. "Just come to the window, that we may see him, for he is riding around the corner into the pleasure garden."

"Are you all, then, wholly beside yourselves, and gone stark mad?" cried the Elector passionately, while he rose from his armchair and proudly drew himself up. "Who gives these two young ladies the privilege of entering my cabinet thus, unannounced and without ceremony? Just answer me one thing, Miss Charlotte Louise, did I permit you to come here?"

"No, dearest father," said the Princess timidly, casting down her large, dark eyes, "no, your grace has not indeed permitted us to do so, but we did not think of that in the joy of our hearts, and because from here is the best lookout upon the pleasure grounds, we——"

"We thought," interrupted the younger sister, who had hardly attained her fifteenth year—"we thought our dear papa, his Electoral Grace, would forgive us and look out with us to catch a sight of our beloved brother. And were we not right, dear papa, were we mistaken in thinking so, and will

your grace not allow your little Sophy Hedwig to lead you to the great corner window, that with mamma you may have a view of dear Frederick William?"

The Princess had approached her father, and, tenderly and coaxingly stroking his cheeks with her little white hand, looked up at him with such a gentle, pleading glance in her blue eyes as George William had never hitherto been known to resist. But this time the eyes of his favorite had no power over the Elector's heart, and indignantly he repelled her encircling arms.

"Let me alone with your 'dear Frederick William,' you saucy piece!" cried he passionately. "You should at all events have waited until I had given you leave to appear here. If, in your childish giddiness, you knew no better, yet your sister Charlotte Louise, at the more mature age of twenty, ought to have arrived at years of discretion, and known what was proper."

"No one knows better what is becoming than the fair young Princess Charlotte Louise, most gracious sir," said Count Adam Schwarzenberg, issuing from the window recess and greeting the Princess with a reverential bow. "In the whole country the Electoral Princess is honored as a brilliant model of fine manners and noble demeanor, and every one feels himself blessed and honored who is permitted to approach her. And is not the young lady right even now, dear sir, in coming here with her young sister? It is surely proper and well for the united Electoral family to be seen by the nation as they look upon the dear son and brother, whose return gladdens their hearts?"

"Well, for aught I care, she may be right," muttered the Elector, "and I will grant my wife and daughters leave to look out of the corner window. But, meanwhile, where is the Electress?"

"Her grace is standing there before the corner window and gazing down so earnestly upon the square that I have not yet been so fortunate as to be allowed to pay my respects to her highness."

"For if the whole world had been assembled together she would have seen nothing but the Electoral Prince," called

out the Elector, shrugging his shoulders. "Go to her, Adam, and present my compliments to her. Tell her that I resign my cabinet to her and my daughters, and will withdraw into my sleeping apartment until this uproar has subsided."

"Oh, do not do so, most honored father," cried the younger Princess. "Stay here, and look out of the window with us."

"Do so, your Electoral Highness," pleaded the count, softly and quickly. "Grant the people the light of your countenance."

"Well, so be it, then," sighed George William. "Call the servants, Charlotte Louise, that they may roll me to the window."

"As if I could not have the privilege of acting as servant to your highness, and as if my arm were not strong enough to guide your highness's chair. Permit me, gracious sir, to roll you to the window."

"And permit me to help your excellency," said Princess Charlotte Louise, smiling, while she seized one of the arms of the fauteuil.

"Now truly this is a very lofty equipage," cried George William, as the fauteuil rolled along through the spacious apartment. "The Stadtholder in the Mark and a Princess of the blood drawing my equipage."

"But what a man sits in it!" said Count Schwarzenberg. "A duke of Prussia, of Pomerania, of Cleves, an Elector of Brandenburg, and——"

"Hurrah, hurrah!" sounded up from below in a chorus of hundreds of voices. "Hurrah! long live the Electoral Prince!"

"He comes! Oh, my son, my son!" cried the Electress. "He comes! George, our son——"

She had turned round and her eye met the count's gaze, who immediately bowed low and reverentially before her. The Electress only thanked him with a slight nod of her head, and herself sprang forward to push the fauteuil into the window niche. Then, with trembling hands, she opened both window shutters and beckoned her daughters to her side.

"He must see us all, *all*," she said. "With one glance he must take in father, mother, and sisters."

"And my most faithful and best-beloved servant, the Stadtholder in the Mark!" cried the Elector. "Come, Adam, place yourself close beside me, that the picture may be complete, and my son may see us all at once."

Boundless public rejoicings seemed to be in progress below; a loud, long-sustained, ever-renewed cheering rolled over the square like the roar of the sea.

"My son, my beloved son!" cried the Electress, leaning far out of the window and stretching out both arms toward the young man, who had just emerged from the shrubbery, on horseback and followed by a brilliant train.

"Brother, dear brother!" called out the two Princesses, leaning out of the other side of the window, and waving their handkerchiefs in token of welcome. Behind them sat the Elector in his great armchair, quite forgotten and quite hidden from view by his wife and daughters, not at all visible to either the people or his son.

"I shall remember this hour, oh! to be sure, I shall remember it," he said, with trembling lips; "my son shall atone to me for this hour of shame and mortification. I——"

The huzzaing and shouting below drowned his words; they came pouring in at the open window like the pealing tones of an organ, like the roar of the sea, like claps of thunder.

The Elector could no longer bear it. He looked up with glances of entreaty at the count, who, drawn up to his full height, stood proud and commanding at the side of his chair, his sharp eyes piercing down into the court over the ladies' heads.

"Ah, Adam," sighed George William, "you, too, have forgotten me, and are only looking upon him who is coming!"

But, however softly these words had been spoken, the count heard them, and tenderly he leaned over the Elector, and seized his hand to kiss it.

"I am looking at the newcomer," he whispered, "but I never forget you, and my heart can never be unmindful of the love and fidelity it owes you."

"Hurrah! Long live the Electoral Prince!" was borne

up in tumultuous uproar from the pleasure garden. "Long live the Electoral Prince! Long live the Elector! Hurrah for the Elector George William!"

"They are calling for you, my husband, they call for you!" said the Electress. "Will you not show yourself to our dear people?"

"I ought, indeed, to be thankful to the dear people," returned her husband. "The dear people have at least reminded the Electress that I still exist, although she had crowded me back and rendered me entirely invisible behind her. Yes, I will show myself to the people, as they still think of me in the midst of their merriment. Step back from the window, ladies, make room for your Elector and lord! And you, Count Schwarzenberg, come and give me your arm; I would lean upon you!"

The count willingly offered the Elector his arm. Powerfully drawn up by him, the Elector rose from his seat, and, leaning upon his favorite, stepped close up to the window. The shouts of joy were for a moment hushed; perhaps because the Electoral Prince had just ridden into the palace yard, perhaps because the ladies' retreat from the window was considered by the people a sign that the Elector was about to appear. And now, within the window frame, was seen the clumsy, broad figure of the Elector; now was seen his large head, sparsely covered with gray hairs, his pale, swollen face, prematurely old, with its melancholy blue eyes and thin, colorless lips, round which played not the slightest smile. In the handsome, powerful, and youthful Electoral Prince the people had just joyfully greeted Brandenburg's future, and now from the window of that gray, gloomy, wretched old palace looked out upon them the hopelessness of Brandenburg's present. Like gazing upon embodied care and joyless resignation it was, to behold the Elector's grave, forbidding aspect, and before it the joyous cry upon the people's lips was silenced. They stared up at the window in dumb horror, and only here and there sounded cries from compassionate or bribed mouths: "Long live the Elector! Long live George William!" And like a dying echo came back the answer on this side and on that, feebly and slowly: "Long live the Elector! Long live George William!"

But now the people caught sight of the tall, stately form, in gold embroidered velvet suit, with the star of brilliants glittering on its breast, which stood beside the Elector; now they recognized that haughty countenance with its glance of sovereign contempt, its smile of lofty condescension upon the thin, scornful lips, and a disturbance was perceptible among the multitudes, as when a sudden gust of wind agitates the waves of the sea and lashes them up into fury and rage. All at once there came thundering up to the window, shrieked, howled, and hissed by the crowd: "Down with the Catholics! Down with Schwarzenberg! Down with the Imperialist!"

A deep flush overspread the Elector's face. He hastily stepped back from the window, and looked almost timidly up at the count, whose countenance meanwhile had not for a moment lost its proud, smiling serenity. He seemed not to have heard the screams of the mob.

"They would vex me to death, therefore do they scream so!" cried the Elector; "they know my regard for Schwarzenberg, and therefore are they so set against him and insult him, in order to insult me through him!"

"My parents, my beloved parents!" cried a clear, rich voice, and a young man tore open the doors of the Electoral cabinet, revealing a tall, slender figure and a noble face, with sparkling eyes and smiling lips. The Electress uttered one scream of rapture, and hastened to meet her son with outstretched arms. He threw himself upon her breast, greeting her with phrases of fond endearment, and when he lifted himself from his mother's heart there were the two sisters to embrace their dear and only brother, to greet him with affectionate words of love, and to hold him long, long in their encircling arms. The Elector had again sunk back into his armchair. His "faithful servant," Count Schwarzenberg, had again rolled him back into the middle of the apartment and stationed himself immediately in the rear.

With unpropitious frowns had the Elector witnessed the first tender greeting exchanged between the Electress and her son. Now, when his sisters in their turn engrossed him and the mother stood looking on in transport, now the Elector

turned round to Schwarzenberg, and an expression of deep bitterness spoke in every feature.

"My son seems not to know that I am yet in the world," he said, with quick, complaining tone of voice. "Had you not better remind him of it for decency's sake, Adam?"

But at this moment the Electoral Prince freed himself from his sisters' arms, perceived the Elector, and sprang forward to him with open arms to throw himself on his heart. But, when he got a nearer view of his father's dark countenance, he let his arms drop, bent his knee before the Elector, and grasped one hand to imprint upon it a reverential kiss.

"My dear father, my most gracious Sovereign and Elector!" cried he in tones full of tenderness, "I beg your pardon that my first word, my first salutation was not given to you. You see, I was always a foolish boy, whom my mother spoils, and who delights in being spoiled."

"I beg your pardon, my husband," said the Electress, approaching her husband; "I alone was to blame that our son did not come first to you, as was his duty, and pay his first respects to his father and Sovereign. I stopped him, and you must not impute as a fault to the son what was occasioned by a mother's tenderness."

The Elector made no reply, but looked down with moody resentment upon the Electoral Prince, who still knelt before him.

"My much-loved, gracious father," cried the Prince, "I once more beg your pardon, and pray you kindly to forget if I have hitherto often given you ground for annoyance, and have not appeared here immediately on your first command. I see my error, and I promise, my dear, kind father, that I have returned home as a penitent, affectionate son, as an obedient subject, whose earnest endeavor shall be to deserve the forgiveness and good opinion of his lord and father, and to live wholly and solely in subjection to his will. Only bid me welcome, too, my most revered sir; bestow upon your son one word of welcome and fatherly love."

The Prince glanced so tenderly at his father, there lay so much feeling in his handsome, expressive countenance, that the Elector could not resist him, but, in spite of himself, felt

his heart stirred by tenderness and emotion. He bowed down to him, a rare smile lit up his face, and he was just opening his lips to greet his son with words of friendliness and love, when the shrieking and shouting down in the pleasure garden, which had ceased for some time (probably because their exhausted throats required rest), burst forth again with redoubled violence.

"Away with the Catholics! Down with Schwarzenberg! Long live the Electoral Prince. Down with Schwarzenberg!" came up with thundering impetuosity.

The friendly words died upon the Elector's lips, and the short sunshine of his smile vanished under a cloud of displeasure.

"It seems, sir," he said, "as if your arrival were a real jubilee for the low rabble, who have assembled down there in the pleasure grounds, and as if your arrival were to be the cause of much vexation to me. What seditious, scandalous words are those shouted by those wretches?"

"I do not know, I did not hear them," said the Electoral Prince quickly. "My whole attention was concentrated upon my father's lips, waiting to hear one gracious word of welcome!"

"The mob saved me that trouble!" cried the Elector. "They cut me off from speech with their 'Long live the Electoral Prince!' What need is there for a further welcome from your old father?"

"I need it much," replied the Electoral Prince, with low, melancholy voice. "I need a kind, gracious word from my father, on returning home after so long an absence; and it would seem to me as if my whole future, my whole life were under a cloud if I lacked the blessing of your love, the sunshine of your favor."

"My son knows how to arrange his words prettily," said the Elector, shrugging his shoulders; "it is very observable that he has become quite a fine, elegant gentleman, who will find but little to his taste among us, and who will suit us just as little! But what are those people forever shouting?" said the Elector, interrupting himself, while he rose impulsively from his armchair, thus obliging the Prince to rise from his

knees. "What infamous hubbub and howling is this, and what do you villains want of us?"

"Nothing further, most noble Elector," replied Count Schwarzenberg, to whom the Elector had turned with his query—"nothing further than that your honor drive me away, nothing further than that you dismiss the hated minister, whom they abhor, simply because he is a Catholic and not a Reformer, and because he is named Schwarzenberg and not Rochow or Quitzow, nor blessed with some country bumpkin's title."

"I will rout this pack of vagabonds!" cried the Elector. "Let them dare just once more to let such an opprobrious, insulting shout be heard!"

And, quite forgetting his weakness and his limb so painfully swollen with gout, the Elector went rapidly to the still open corner window, and, leaning far out of it, lifted up his hand, commanding quiet. The people took this inclination of the body, this movement of the hand, for a token of grace, for a kind salutation on the part of their Sovereign, perhaps even for a granting of their demand. They roared aloud with delight, waved aloft their hats and caps, their arms and handkerchiefs, and cried and whooped and hurrahed: "Long live the Elector! Long live George William! Long live the Electoral Prince!"

The Elector stepped back and shut the window so violently that the little panes of glass, framed in lead, fairly rattled.

"Frantic populace!" he growled, "they mix up a wretched salad of cheers and curses, mingle weeds with their herbs, and fancy that we will find this devilish compound pleasing to our palates! We shall remember them for it, and——"

"Most gracious sir!" cried Count Schwarzenberg, with radiant countenance, approaching the Elector—"most gracious sir, in this blessed hour of our beloved Electoral Prince's return, I have a favor to ask of your highness. His grace has just greeted me so amiably, so condescendingly, that he has caused my heart to overflow with joy, and I feel the strongest desire to give expression to this joy. The return of the Electoral Prince is just as propitious an event for me as for the

Electoral family, and for all your subjects it is a festive occasion which can not be sufficiently honored, and therefore I entreat your highness to permit me to celebrate it at my house also, and to gratify me by being present yourself at this *fête*, with all the other members of your exalted family."

The Elector looked upon his minister with an expression of joyful tenderness, and then turned his glance upon the Electoral Prince, who stood silent, and with lowered eyelids, beside his mother and sisters.

"Well, what say you to it, sir?" asked George William. "Do you accept the invitation to the feast?"

"I, Electoral Lord?" asked the Prince, astonished. "It is not for me to accept, or to say anything. I only await the decision of your highness, and now allow myself to remark that I shall ever feel honored by an invitation from the Stadtholder in the Mark, and that no one can have a higher appreciation of his services and a greater respect for his statesmanlike experience and wisdom than myself."

"He knows how to speak, does he not, count?" asked the Elector, indicating his son by a quick nod of the head. "Well, since it depends on my decision, I shall gladly extend to you my leave to celebrate the Electoral Prince's return by a little merrymaking, were it only that the good-for-nothing people of Berlin may see that we and our family are devoted to Count Schwarzenberg now as before, and that their pitiful howls have had no influence upon us and our determinations. Yes, we will come to your party, Adam, we accept your invitation cordially and affectionately."

"I thank my most gracious lord for this act of favor and condescension," cried the count, pressing the Elector's proffered hand to his lips. "Will your highness extend your favor by appointing the day on which so distinguished an honor is to befall my house?"

"Well, that you may not have time to make too great preparations, and put us to shame by the splendor of your *fête*, we will allow you but a short respite. To-day is Wednesday, the eighteenth of June, we therefore appoint Sunday, the twenty-second of June, for your festival."

"Be it then on Sunday, a sunny day truly for me and for my house," cried Count Schwarzenberg. "My son, too, will do himself the honor to participate in the joys of the *fête*, which your highness will do me the favor to give in my house, for he has returned from his journey, and will this very day petition for leave to present himself."

A fugitive glance from the count strayed across to the ladies, while he bowed low before them, but, however cursory this glance, it gave him full opportunity for perceiving Princess Charlotte Louise's deep blush, and the joyful flashing of her eyes.

"She loves him," he said softly to himself, "yes, she loves him, and my son will be Elector of Brandenburg."

"We shall be pleased to see again your son, Count John Adolphus," said George William kindly. "He is a very elegant and accomplished gentleman, besides being a very submissive and obedient son, in whom your father's heart may well rejoice. My son would do well to follow his example, and I shall be delighted for him to form a friendship with the count."

"I shall diligently strive to gain the friendship of the son as well as of the father," replied the Electoral Prince, smiling, "and it shall not be my fault, indeed, if I do not obtain it."

"Most honored sir, you can gain no more than you already possess," exclaimed Schwarzenberg, bowing low. "Will the Electress now permit me to address a question to her highness?"

"Ask your question quickly," cried the Electress, "that I may hear the request it is to introduce, for I am really curious to know what the rich and powerful Count Schwarzenberg can have to desire of the poor, uninfluential Electress."

"First, then, my question, most gracious lady: At what hour does your highness command my *fête* to begin?"

"Will you leave the decision to me, my husband?" asked the Electress, smiling.

The Elector nodded assent.

"As you have invited my daughters," said the Electress, "I presume that there will certainly be dancing, and evening

hours suit best for that. Let the *fête* commence at six o'clock."

The Elector's brow darkened, for he did not at all relish gay, noisy evening parties, and a solemn dinner at the regular hour would have been far more welcome to him.

"Your grace has prescribed the hour for the opening of the ball," said Count Schwarzenberg reverentially. "But I now also entreat further that you name a dinner hour, for I hope your highness will favor me by dining with me on that day."

"Yes, that honor shall be shown you," cried the Elector cheerfully. "We shall come, surely we shall come. And I will myself appoint the hour for the mid-day meal. Let it be at two o'clock. Then we shall have some pleasant hours at table before the dancing comes off and the music puts our heads in a whirl."

"Two o'clock, then, most gracious sir."

"And now, Sir Count," cried the Electress, "now for your request. Say quickly what it is. What can you have to ask of me?"

"Most gracious Electress, I hardly venture to express it, and yet, by granting my request, you would do me a very great pleasure and honor. Some splendid silk stuffs have been sent me from France by my cousin, who is Austrian ambassador there. I had given him such a commission, as I thought of making a present to my aunt, the Countess Schwarzenberg at Vienna. My cousin bought these stuffs for me, and writes me, moreover, that they are the newest fabrics from the looms of Lyons, and that he has just sent three such dresses to the Empress and the two archduchesses at Vienna. Now, it did not seem to me becoming or appropriate that the Countess Schwarzenberg should wear robes such as the Empress and archduchesses wear, and I think gold and silver brocade suited to none but ladies of princely blood."

"And you would give them to us, Sir Count?" cried the young Princess Sophie Hedwig, with heightened color in her cheeks and sparkling eyes.

The Electress and older Princess laughed aloud at this naïve and hasty question, and even the Elector laughed a lit-

tle. A slight blush suffused the Electoral Prince's face; he withdrew to the window and looked out. Count Schwarzenberg, however, looked smilingly upon the young Princess, whose girlish impatience had come so opportunely to his rescue.

"I would venture," he said, "most humbly to ask her highness's permission to lay the brocade stuffs at her feet."

"Mamma, do so," coaxed Sophie Hedwig; "take the pretty dress patterns from the good Stadtholder."

"Well, then, I shall do so," said the Electress. "I accept your present for myself and the young ladies, and I thank you."

She extended her hand to the count, which he kissed.

"And you will give orders, Electress, that the dresses be made up in time for Count Schwarzenberg's *fête!*" cried the Elector cheerfully. "You must at least honor him by displaying his present first at his own house."

"There are a few plates accompanying it," remarked Schwarzenberg—"a few plates on which are painted the newest styles of ladies' dresses now fashionable in Paris. The robes of the Empress and the archduchesses were made by them."

"So shall our dresses be too!" cried Sophie Hedwig, joyfully clapping her hands. "Shall they not, dearest mamma—shall not our dresses be made by the fashion plates?"

Just at this moment the Electoral Prince again emerged from the window recess, and approached his father.

"I beg your highness's gracious permission to withdraw," he said. "I should like to retire to my own apartments a little while, in order to lay aside my dusty traveling suit."

"Do so, my son," replied the Elector, with a friendly nod of the head. "Go to your rooms, which have been prepared for you a whole half year, and await your return. Dress yourself and rejoin us at dinner. For the rest, I bid you heartily welcome, and may your return be productive of good, not evil, to yourself and us all."

"God grant that I may merit my father's favor, and ever show myself worthy of it!" exclaimed the Electoral Prince,

with deep seriousness. "I have now the honor of taking my leave!"

He bowed low before the Elector, and with a like salutation bade farewell to the Electress and the Princesses. After greeting the count with a smile and a wave of his hand, he hurried with light elastic step through the apartment to the door.

IV.—The Donation.

When the Electoral Prince left his father's cabinet he found without the officers and servants of the household arranged in solemn order. They received him with a thrice-repeated cheer that was loud enough to penetrate through the door into the Electoral apartment, and to reach the Elector's ears in a manner by no means pleasant.

Affectionately and smilingly Frederick William thanked them. He could call each one of them by name, and charmed them all by recalling little incidents of his earlier days in which they had borne a part.

"I hope we shall always remain good friends," he said, when he had reached the door of the long entrance hall, "and once more I thank you for your friendly greeting."

Old Jock, who stood next to the door, and who looked quite grand in his artfully patched livery of state—old Jock had already just opened his mouth for another thundering hurrah, when the Electoral Prince laid his hand gently upon his shoulder.

"Hush, Jock, hush! do not shout," he said, loud enough to be heard by everybody. "It is enough that I read my welcome in your eyes, and not necessary for your lips to pronounce the words aloud. Our much-loved and gracious father is sick and suffering, and we must not therefore allow his rest to be disturbed by loud noises. Be quiet and silent, therefore, and only believe me when I say that I know I am welcome to you all!"

He gave them one more friendly nod, and stepped out

upon the long corridor, on the other side of which lay his own apartments. Quickly he went on, opened the door of the antechamber with a vigorous pressure of his hand, and entered. The trunks and other baggage lay in wild disorder, heaped up in the outer hall, and old Dietrich, with a few other servants and lackeys, was busied in untying parcels and unpacking. The Electoral Prince went hurriedly past, and entered his sleeping room. Here, too, he found all in confusion; the dust lay thick upon the unwieldy old furniture, whose cushions were covered with faded and even here and there ragged tapestry. From the walls, hung with discolored papering, a few old ancestral portraits looked gravely and gloomily down upon him, and their melancholy eyes seemed to ask him what he wanted here, and why he had come to awaken them from their repose, and disturb the dust which had been collecting for years. It seemed to the Prince as if he heard this inhospitable question quite clearly uttered by the lips of his ancestor Albert Achilles, before whose picture he was just passing, and whose large, glittering eyes seemed to look out in defiance. Frederick William stopped and looked at his forefather with a sad smile. "I have come much against my will, Elector Albert Achilles," he said. "I assure you, very much against my will, and if I did not think of the future, I would go away again and *never* come back. But for the sake of the future the present must be endured; therefore forgive me, my great, valiant ancestor, and believe me I will do you honor!"

He nodded to the picture and strode on, advancing into the next room, which was to be his study. Here everything was still exactly as he had left it almost four years ago. The old furniture stood unmoved in its familiar places; there was still the brown varnished writing table at which he had formerly applied himself to his studies, in company with his tutor Leuchtmar von Kalkhun; beside it stood the simple, rude book shelves, and on them, covered with dust and cobwebs, the old leather-bound volumes from which he had drunk in knowledge and wisdom. Before both windows hung, just as then, the dark red silken curtains, only that the sun had partially deprived them of their original coloring and inter-

woven sickly streaks of yellow. The old sofa, too, was yet in existence with its sleek brown leather covering, and by its side stood the two leather armchairs, with their high, straight backs and awkwardly turned feet. No one had taken the trouble to repair these inroads of dilapidation, and, long as they had been expecting the Electoral Prince, no preparations whatever had been made for his reception. Four years had passed over these chambers without leaving any further trace of their presence than dust and cobwebs, and faded stripes on cushion and curtain. Sighing, the Electoral Prince threw himself into one of the two armchairs. The old piece of furniture creaked under him, as if by this sound it would greet him and remind him of the past. He leaned his head against the back, whose leather cooled his temples as if a cold hand had been laid upon the brow of him who had just come home. Slowly his glance swept through the room, and it seemed to him as if he saw the four last years glide by like phantom shapes through the lonely, dreary, and dusty chamber. They looked at him with wan smiles and lusterless eyes, and hovered past shadowlike, leaving behind for him nothing but dust, nothing but a hardly cicatrized wound. Hardly cicatrized! Sometimes it bled yet, this wound of his past. Sometimes he thought that there was no healing for it, that it would never close, and that its pain would never cease.

Just so thought he as the shadows of the four years floated by him through that gloomy, dusty room. Just so thought he, when the youngest of these phantoms paused beside him, threw back her gray veil of mist, and under it disclosed to him a beautiful, rosy female face, with flaming eyes, pouting lips, and lovely smile, when she raised her hand and beckoned to him, whispering: "Leave all behind and come to me! *I* am waiting for you! *I* love you! Oh, come to me!"

How sweetly enticing were these whispered sounds, how burning was the pain in the wound but barely healed! Again it began to bleed, again tears rose to his eyes. He was not ashamed of them, and yet, as he felt them flow burning down his cheeks, he stretched out his hands deprecatingly to the phantom with the rosy cheeks and fascinating smile, to the shadow of the last year, and murmured: "Away from me!

Come not near me, to tempt my heart! I may not follow you —I may not, and I *will* not."

"And I *will* not!" he repeated quite aloud, and jumped up from his easychair, shaking his head defiantly and proudly, like a roused lion.

"What will you not?" asked a soft voice behind him, and when he turned round he saw at his back Baron von Leuchtmar, who had just entered, and whose mild, gentle glances rested upon him with tender expression.

"Leuchtmar!" cried the Prince, hastening to meet him with both hands outstretched. "God be praised, that you are here, that you come to me at this moment! Ah! would that you had not left me at Spandow, but had remained at my side!"

"No, my Prince! It was proper that the eyes of the people should have greeted you alone, and that the boy, whom they had seen go off at the side of his tutor, should now appear to them again as a bold and independent young man, who relies upon his own powers only, and has no longer any tutor at his side, but his own sense of duty and his conscience. But why so sad, Prince Frederick William? Your journey was verily a triumphal procession; like a Roman imperator you entered your father's city, and now do I find you here, solitary, with troubled countenance, with tears upon your cheeks?"

"With tears upon my cheeks?" repeated the Prince; "with imprecations, with wrath, and sorrow in my heart. Oh, friend, why were you not with me? You would have saved me perhaps from the bitterness of the last hour. You would have stood by me, would have encouraged me!"

"My God, what has happened then?"

"It has happened that I was received as if I were some criminal returning after a course of sin!" cried Frederick William, with indignant pain. "It has happened that they have treated me as if I were a rioter and inciter of rebellion, who had come hither with criminal designs, at the head of a mob, and as a captain of robbers, who had attacked his Sovereign in his stronghold. It has happened that they allowed me to sue for pardon upon my knees without lifting me up

—that they have treated me like an abandoned villain, from whom they expected each hour to witness some new outbreak."

"But consider, my Prince, that you had reason to expect that your reception would be ungracious, and that it was your father from whom these trials would come to you."

"No, not from my father, but from *him*—that evil spirit who, with his cold smile and mocking composure, stood at my father's side! He has poisoned my father's heart with jealousy and hate, he has filled it with mistrust toward his only son, and sowed discord, that he may himself reap a harvest from the hatred! And he was witness of my humiliation, and I saw how he looked down upon me with scornful superiority as I knelt before my father and pleaded in vain for one word of love from his lips! But *he* had withered this word upon his lips, and only for *him* were words of tenderness and veneration there! Only for *him* acknowledgments, confidence, and love! As he stood there with cold and haughty face at the side of my poor father, who, stooping and insignificant, cowered below him—oh, so far below him in his easychair—I felt it in every nerve of my heart, in every fiber of my brain, that *he* and *he* alone is ruling lord here, the commander and Sovereign; and that he who will not bow and cringe before him, will by him be hurled into the dust and trodden upon! They all bow before him—*all!* He is like a magician, who by the magnetic glances of his eyes subjects to his will all who approach him, and makes the stoutest hearts soft and pliant, so that like wax they allow themselves to be molded by his forming hands. Even my mother, who is his enemy, who has been battling against him for twenty years, even she is conquered by him, and he has become her master and forces her to his will. She knows not at all that she has fallen within the circle of his magic, yet is, like all the rest, a mere tool in his hands. But she feels it not, and fancies herself free, while she lies bound, and has no will of her own in his presence. I have seen it, I have felt it, and it has filled my heart with unutterable woe, with raging anger. She felt not at all the shame and humiliation under which I almost expired; she came not to my aid, for the magician was there,

and in his presence my mother forgot her son so recently come back to her, and *he* was the center around which all turned, *he* was master of the situation, and before *him* all shrank into wretched nothingness. He charmed the hearts which had remained cold at my reception, charmed them with the prospect of a *fête*, which, as he said, he was to give in my honor, and they believed the mockery, and allowed themselves to be touched by that noble condescension, and felt not the cruel boasting with which he solemnizes the return of him who is a thorn in his flesh, a thorn which he is firmly determined to pluck out, and tread under foot! I came here humble, poor, and empty-handed, and *he* solemnizes my return by offering presents to my mother and my sisters! And they accept them, feel not at all the degradation, and will appear at the *fête* in clothes with which my enemy, my adversary, my murderer has presented them!"

"Prince, you go too far. Your hatred carries you away."

"No, I do not go too far!" cried the Prince, beside himself. His countenance was deadly pale, his eyes flashed, and his whole being seemed pervaded by the fire of wrath and hatred. "No, I do not go too far, and my hatred does not carry me away! He is the evil demon of my house—of my country! He is to blame for all the disasters of the last twenty years, for all the humiliation and shame by which my family has been visited. The Mark is to be ruined—that is his end, that is his aim; the Electoral house of Brandenburg must die out—that is his hope; and he will leave untried no means whereby this hope may become reality. He has already tried once to murder me,* and he will try it again. A dagger's

* Shortly before the Electoral Prince left home he found one evening under his bed a man armed with two daggers. Upon the Prince's outcry, his servants hurried to his assistance and succeeded in capturing the murderer, who endeavored to make his escape. He confessed that he had come to murder the Electoral Prince, and that he had not done so of his own accord, but had been bribed to undertake the deed by a very distinguished lord. This assertion was confirmed by a considerable sum of money, which was found in his pockets upon being searched. They put him in prison, but two days afterward he had vanished, and with him his jailer, who had connived at his flight. The Electoral Prince was firmly convinced that this murderer had been suborned by Count

point lurks in each glance that he fixes upon me, a drop of poison in each word that he directs to me. If I stood alone with him upon the summit of a tower, he would hurl me down, and then afterward follow my coffin with a thousand tears! And my father would lean upon him, and thank God that only his son had been snatched from him, not his friend, his favorite; and my mother would weep for me, and yet go about in mourning which he had presented to her, and she would esteem it a peculiar act of amiability if he should exert himself to divert her mind and raise her spirits. No voice would be raised against him, and no one would venture to accuse him, for my father himself would protect him, and the grace and favor of the Emperor would speak him clear of any suspicion. He is my master, my lord—that is what fills me with rage and indignation; and I will surely die of this if the count does not succeed in dispatching me first, and putting me out of the way."

"He will not venture to attempt that, for he knows public opinion would accuse and denounce him as the murderer."

"What cares he for public opinion, what asks he about it —*he* who has power to repress it, *he* who stands so secure that it can not touch *him?*"

"Nobody stands so high, Prince, that public opinion can not reach him and dash him into the depths below, for public opinion is the voice of the nation, and the voice of the nation is the voice of God! And believe me, Prince, this voice will one day accuse and sentence him."

"Yes, one day perhaps, when he has thrust me out of the way and murdered me, when my father has gone to his last home, when the Emperor has pronounced the Mark of Brandenburg an unincumbered fief, and bestowed it as an act of grace upon Count Schwarzenberg or his son. Oh, I know all his plans, and I know that no moment of my life is henceforth secure—know that I am a victim of death if prudence and cunning do not save me! I thought of all this during my long journey to this place. I have weighed all, pondered all, and my whole future lay before me like a white sheet of

Schwarzenberg, and shortly before his death himself related this story to his physician. *Vide* Kuster, Youthful Life of the Great Elector.

paper. I saw a hand unroll it, and with bloody letters inscribe the word 'Death'; but I saw this word blotted out by a cautious finger, and, ere it was written to the end, replaced by the word 'Life' in characters small and hardly visible. Yes, I *will* live, *will* reign, *will* have fame, honor, and influence, *will* make a name for myself! Leuchtmar, I have left behind in Holland my youth, my hopes, my dreams, my heart! I come here as a man, despite my eighteen years, as a man who from the wreck of his youth will save only this: the future and fame! A man, who has suffered so much, that he can say of himself: I defy pain, and it has no longer any power over me! I defy life, and *will* conquer it! Yes, Leuchtmar, I *will* conquer it; and although I no longer love it, I do not mean to allow it to be snatched away from me. Hear me, friend, for to-day is the last time for a long while that I may speak openly and candidly to you. I entreat you, guide of my youth, to preserve for me your friendship and your faith. I beseech you never to lose confidence in me, and, if ever a doubt should intrude itself with regard to me, to remember this hour, in which I have laid bare to you my heart, and in which you have been a witness to my indignation and grief, my excitement and hatred! You are familiar with my countenance, friend; impress it upon your memory, in order that you may never forget it, even if you should not see it for a long time again. Look once more in my eyes, and read in my glances my love and reverence for you!"

"I do look into your eyes, son of my heart," said Leuchtmar, deeply moved. "I look through your eyes into your soul, into your heart, and read therein great determination and heroic aims. Strive after them, my favorite, and when the present seems to you dark and gloomy, then lift your eye to the glittering star, which hovers over you and is your future. To endure evil, and still to remain joyful and valiant, therein lies true heroism. To turn from the dust of earthly needs, to step over it with head held heavenward, thereby is true faith proved. God bless you, my son! Be brave, be wise, be true! Trust in yourself, your friends, your people, and your God; then is the future yours, and you will overcome all your foes, and will triumph over the proud man

who now thinks that he triumphs over you. I said to you, be brave, be wise, be true. I forgot one thing, though, which I shall now add—*be circumspect!* Remember that oftentimes it is not the sword which carries off the victory, but cunning; remember Brutus, who freed Rome."

"Oh, my friend, you have spoken truth," exclaimed the Prince; "you have read to the bottom of my soul, and understood my inmost thoughts. Now am I glad and full of confidence, for my friend and teacher will never doubt me. And hear one thing more, my Leuchtmar. You must accept a memento of this hour, a memento which I prepared even before my departure from The Hague, and which shall be to you a proof of my gratitude. I am poor and powerless, and as I build all my hopes upon the future, so must I do with my presents as well. You must accept from me a gift of my future, friend. I know full well that what you have done for me can not be recompensed, but I would so gladly testify my gratitude to you, and therefore I give you this paper!"

He drew forth a paper from his pocketbook, and handed it to Leuchtmar with a friendly smile. "Take it and read," he said.

Baron Leuchtmar von Kalkhun took the paper, and fastened his eyes upon the words, which were inscribed in large letters on the outside.

"A Deed of Expectancy!" he said, astonished.

The Electoral Prince nodded. "A deed of expectancy, written with my own hand and sealed with my own signet ring. Yes, yes, my friend, I have nothing to give away but expectations; yet if the Electoral Prince should ever become Elector, he will convert these expectations into reality and truth. Now unfold the paper, and see what manner of expectation it holds out."

"An act, donating the feudal tenure of Neuenhof, lying within the territories of Cleves!" cried Leuchtmar joyfully. "Oh, my dear Prince, that is truly a princely gift!"

"Yet it is not the Prince, but the grateful scholar who gives it to you," said Frederick William, "and in proof of this I have written these words, which I will read to you myself." He bent over the paper, and read: "We have volun-

tarily and with due consideration promised and engaged to give to Baron Leuchtmar von Kalkhun this estate of Neuenhof, out of the particular and friendly affection which we bear to him. We also swear that if we hereafter attain to power and authority, and our much-esteemed Romilian von Leuchtmar be to our sorrow cut off by death, we in the same way will this estate to his eldest son, and grant him the enjoyment of all that we assigned and destined for his father in his lifetime." *

"That is indeed to carry happiness and reward beyond the grave!" cried Leuchtmar, with tears in his eyes. "Oh, I thank you, my Prince, thank you from my inmost soul, for myself and my children!"

"You have nothing at all to thank me for, friend," said the Prince. "I shall ever be much more in your debt. If, however, I some day become a good Prince to my country and a father to my people, then you must reflect that this is the return I make to you, my teacher, my educator! You see I hope in the future, and think that I shall succeed in evading murderous designs and fulfill my aims. But, indeed, your warning I may never forget, and circumspect I *must* be first of all. Wear a mask, as Brutus did! Let me embrace you once more, friend Leuchtmar; look me once more in the eye. And now—I hear some one coming! Farewell, Leuchtmar! I put on my mask and not for a moment can I withdraw it from my features."

V.—Brutus.

The door was now opened, a valet entered and announced, "Her highness the Electress!" And before the Electoral Prince had time to advance, the Electress had entered the room.

"I come to welcome you once more, my Frederick!" she cried, stretching out her arms to her son. "Entirely without

* von Orlich, History of the State of Prussia, vol. i, p. 42.

witnesses, simply as his mother would I greet my son, and tell him how happy I am that he is once more here."

She flung her arms around her son's neck, and pressed him ardently to her bosom. Baron Leuchtmar, who upon the Electress's approach had stepped aside, now crept softly through the apartment to the door, and was already in the act of opening it, when the Electress quickly raised her head and looked around.

"Stay where you are, Baron Leuchtmar," she said; "why would you slip away from us?"

"I may not presume by my presence to disturb the confidential discourse between the Electress and her son."

"You do not disturb us at all, for you belong to us, Leuchtmar," replied Charlotte Elizabeth, nodding kindly to him. "On the contrary, I will tell you that I knew you were here, and came here on that very account, in order to salute you without witnesses, and to have a private conversation with you and my son. For well I know, Leuchtmar, that we may confide in you, and that you belong to *us*—that is to say, to the enemies of Schwarzenberg, to the enemies of the Imperialists and Catholics, to the friends of the Swedes and Reformers."

"Your highness may be well assured that I return home just as I went away," said Leuchtmar earnestly—"that is to say, an upright Protestant, a true Brandenburgher, and a determined opponent of those who concluded the peace of Prague, and thereby separated the Elector of Brandenburg from the Swedes, and made him wholly and solely subservient to the Emperor's interests."

"You will not name *him*, the evildoer, who has brought this to pass," cried the Electress, "but I will name him: it is Count Schwarzenberg! It is the Stadtholder in the Mark, who has brought upon us all this mischief and disgrace, who has sundered us from our nearest blood relations, the family of the Swedish King, and has leagued us with and subjected us to those who are our sworn enemies and adversaries, the Imperialists, the Austrians. Oh, my son! promise me that you will some day take vengeance for the ignominy and humiliation which we must now undergo. Swear in this first

hour of your return home, solemnly joining hands with me, that as soon as you come into power the first act of your government shall be to renounce allegiance to the Emperor and to ally yourself again with the Swedes, our natural allies."

She stretched out her right hand to her son. "Swear, my son!" she cried, solemnly, "give me your hand upon it!"

But Frederick William did not lay his hand within hers. He drew back, declining her proffered hand.

"Forgive me, my dearest mother," he said, "forgive me; but I can not swear, for I do not know whether I could keep my oath! May the good God long preserve my gracious father's life, and grant him a glorious reign. But if hereafter, and surely to my deepest regret, duty and the right of succession deliver into my hands the reins of government, then I must guide them, as circumstances direct, as determined by the contingencies of the times and the good of the country; and I dare not bind myself beforehand by any given word or by promises."

"You refuse, my son, to promise me that you will make amends for all the evil done by that wicked enemy of your house, your family, and your country?"

"Dearest mother, I know not of whom you speak, and who it is that has burdened himself with so heinous a crime."

With impulsive movement the Electress laid her hand upon his arm, and looked him steadily in the eye.

"Are you dissembling, or is that the truth?" she asked. "You do not know of whom I speak? You do not know who is the enemy of your house and family?"

"I am trying in vain to study it out, mother, and I beg you not to be angry with me on that account, for your grace must reflect that I have been absent almost four years, and am therefore a little unacquainted with the situation of affairs here. If you had addressed that question to me before my departure, most assuredly I should have replied without hesitation, 'It is Count Schwarzenberg!' But I have since then found out that I had done the count injustice in many things through my inexperience and want of foresight; that he is a very great and experienced statesman and politician, who with his far-seeing glances can discern much more clearly

than I with my unpracticed eyes the relations of things. Who knows but that, after all, the peace of Prague has been a real blessing to our land. When I behold its present pitiable and languishing condition as a neutral, how can I avoid reflecting with horror upon what might have been the state of things had we joined any decided war party. Had we sided with the Swedes, the enmity of the powerful Emperor, vastly surpassing us in material resources, would long since have destroyed us root and branch, and my dear father would have most probably shared the same lamentable fate as the Elector of the Palatinate, his brother-in-law, or the Margrave of Liegnitz and Jägerndorf, his cousin. He must have wandered with wife and children an exile in foreign lands, or died of grief among strangers. On the other hand, had we sided with the Emperor against the Swedes, a raging, implacable foe would have quartered himself in the heart of our dominions, and not merely Pomerania, but the Mark and the duchy of Prussia would have been overrun by his warlike hordes. But on my journey hither I have witnessed the misery and unspeakable wretchedness of our land, and asked myself with heavy, sorrowing heart what would have become of our unhappy country in times of war if neutrality could reduce it to such poverty and plunge it in such want and suffering. And then I was forced to acknowledge that Count Schwarzenberg had acted right well as Stadtholder in the Mark in wishing, before all things, to preserve the Mark intrusted to him from yet greater calamity, by holding it to that neutrality, being alike impartial between the Emperor and the Swedes. I therefore begged his pardon in my heart for having often accused him unjustly before, for he is indeed a faithful and zealous servant to his master, and especially endeavors to further his interests, to maintain his position, and to console him in these times of affliction. I see, too, that not merely the Elector holds him in high estimation, and honors him as his true and valued counselor and friend, but that my mother as well has taken him into her favor, and that she has quite recovered from the mistrust with which she previously regarded him. For surely it is a proof of great favor when the Electress allows the count to offer presents of dresses

to herself and her daughters, and no one of us can mistrust *him*, who so cordially rejoices over my return that he volunteers to celebrate it by a splendid festival. The whole Electoral family has accepted the invitation to this festival, and thereby prove to Berlin, yea, to the whole country, that we are on the best terms with the Stadtholder, and that nothing has transpired which could shake our confidence in him.'"

The Electress had listened to her son with ever-growing amazement. Her glances had grown more and more indignant; she had often turned from her son to Leuchtmar, as if to read in his features whether or not he shared her astonishment and irritation. Now, when the Prince was silent, she stepped across to Leuchtmar, and laid her hand upon his arm.

"Leuchtmar," she asked with trembling voice, "is he in earnest? Has he actually altered so entirely? Has he really gone over to our enemies and adversaries?"

"Most gracious lady, the Electoral Prince is by far too tender a son ever to become alienated from his mother," replied the baron earnestly.

"He speaks the truth, my dearest mother," exclaimed Frederick William, nearing his mother. "Never could I alter toward you, never forget the gratitude and love I owe you, never go over to your enemies and adversaries. But why should we carry politics into private life, and what have Swedes and Imperialists, Catholics and Reformers to do with our family life and our domestic circle? Let us hand politics over to those whose duty it is to deal with them; let us not seek to meddle in the government, for we have no right to do so, and should step aside for those who understand matters far better than we do, and who manage the machine of state with as much foresight as wisdom. I, at least, am determined to hold myself aloof from all such burdensome affairs, to enjoy my youth and freedom, and I thank God that I have not to bear the weight of administering the government, but have only the pleasant task allotted me of permitting myself to be governed!"

"It is not possible!" cried the Electress, with an outburst

of passion—"no, it is not possible that *my* son can so speak and think! O Leuchtmar! what have you made of my son? Who has changed him, my darling, my only son? I hoped that he would come back a hero, around whom would cluster all those who are true to our house, our faith, and our fatherland! I hoped that in him I should find a refuge against the aggressions, the villainy, and the wiles of my enemy! I hoped that the son would succeed in winning back his father's heart, and turning him against that proud man who rules him entirely, and who will crush us all. O God! my God! for three long years I have been looking forward to his return as the time of vengeance and retribution, and now that son is here, and what do I find in him? A son weakly obedient to his father, a submissive admirer of Count Schwarzenberg, a weakling who longs not at all for honor and influence, who is glad that he has not to govern and work, but that others must govern and work for him! Alas! I am a poor mother, and much to be pitied, for in vain have I hoped that my son would assist me to avenge the misfortunes of my house, and punish and bring my enemies to account!"

She covered her face with her hands, weeping aloud. The Electoral Prince gave her a look of mingled grief and pain, took one hurried step forward, as if he would go to her, and encircle her in his arms, then paused, retreated slowly, gently, ever farther from the spot where she still stood with face concealed and sobbing aloud. It was as if an invisible hand continually drew him farther from his mother, ever nearer the door of the antechamber. Now he stood close to it, leaned against it, and—was the old castle so disjointed, or had the Electoral Prince with sudden touch pressed upon the latch?—the door flew open. The Electoral Prince fell backward into the antechamber, and, had it not been for the Electress's valet, against whom he stumbled, would have fallen to the ground.

"By my faith!" he cried, while he nodded to the lackey, who stood there with red face and deep embarrassment of manner—"by my faith! it was a piece of good luck for me that you were standing so near the door, my friend, else I should probably have had a bad fall. This rickety old castle

must be repaired. One can not even lean against the doors without their flying open!"

He nodded to the lackey, who stood there in confusion, not having at all recovered his self-possession, and stepped back into the room. In passing, his eye caught that of Leuchtmar, who replied by a nod of assent, stolen and significant; then he approached the Electress, who, surprised by this sudden and unexpected interlude, had let her hands glide from before her face, and now dried her tears.

"I beg my revered mother's pardon for disturbing her so ridiculously," he said, seizing her hand and pressing it to his lips. "It was not my fault, and only occasioned by the insecure fastening upon the door. It was by a right fortunate accident that your grace commanded your valet to station himself close to the door of the cabinet, for he thereby saved me from an unpleasant fall."

"I did not command the lackey to station himself in your sleeping apartment," said the Electress, "and consider it contrary to all rules of propriety."

She rapidly crossed the study and opened the door just as the lackey was slinking through the one opposite.

"Frederick, come here!" cried the Electress, and with head sunk and humbled mien the lackey came a few paces nearer.

"Did I not order you to wait for me in the antechamber, and to forewarn us of the approach of any one else?" asked the Electress.

"Your highness," replied the lackey humbly, "I followed your grace's orders exactly, and stood here in the antechamber and kept guard, but nobody came."

"But this is not the antechamber, you blockhead!" cried the Electress. "It is there, without! Go out there and wait!"

The lackey made haste to obey the order given him, and the Electress turned to the Prince. "I beg you, my son, to pardon the man his stupidity," said she; "but he deserves some indulgence in so far as he has only been in our service for a short while, and consequently is not well acquainted with the plan of the palace. My valet fell sick on the journey

from Königsberg here, and we were obliged to leave him behind, which was so much the more inconvenient as he was our hairdresser besides, and understood how to arrange the Elector's hair as well as my own and the young ladies'. Count Schwarzenberg heard of it, and by a piece of good fortune, was able to spare us one of his valets."

"Oh!" cried the Electoral Prince, smiling. "This fellow, then, has been transferred from the Stadtholder's service to that of your grace?"

"Yes, and I must say that he is a very useful and efficient servant, who understands all the newest styles of French hairdressing, and is well skilled in other ways also. I beg you therefore to excuse him for this little mistake."

"He is perfectly excusable," said the Electoral Prince, bowing. "So much the more excusable, as it might well happen that he is not yet familiar with this castle."

"It is true," cried the Electress, casting her eyes around the room, "it does look a little dilapidated and desolate here, and care ought indeed to have been taken to refurnish your apartments and give them a more comfortable aspect. You know, Frederick, we only expect to tarry here for a short time, and think of returning to Prussia very soon, and there I shall see myself that you are provided with handsomer and more commodious rooms. There I am the princely lady of the house, and everywhere reigning duchess, while here, in the resident palace of Berlin, I seem to myself only a guest, who has nothing at all to say in the directing of the household, but must silently acquiesce in everything. And it *is* so, too, and has come to this pass, that the Stadtholder in the Mark is the only ruling lord and commander, and the Elector seems to come here only as the Stadtholder's guest."

"The Stadtholder, though, seems at least a right polite and splendid host," remarked the Electoral Prince, smiling, "a host who lays himself out to attend to the comfort and entertainment—nay, even to the wardrobes—of his noble guests."

"Your Electoral Highnesses!" cried an advancing lackey —"your Electoral Highnesses, the steward of the household is without, and announces that dinner is served, and that the

Elector and the young ladies have already repaired to the dining hall."

"Then let us go too, my son," said the Electress, offering her hand to the Electoral Prince.

"But, most gracious mother, I still have on my traveling suit, and——"

"My son," sighed the Electress, "your traveling suit is so showy and elegant that I can only wish that in the future your court dress may always be so handsome. Come, give me your arm, and let us hurry, for your father does not like to be kept waiting, and is very punctual at mealtimes. You, Baron von Leuchtmar, follow us. We herewith invite you to be our guest, and to accompany us to table."

The Electress took the Prince's proffered arm, and swept through the door held open for her by the lackey. The steward of the household, who had awaited them in the antechamber, golden staff in hand, now preceded them, the lackeys flew before them to open the doors, and through a suite of gloomy, deserted rooms, with old-fashioned, dusty, and half-decayed furniture, moved the princely pair, followed by Baron von Leuchtmar, behind whom strutted the lackeys at a respectful distance. The Elector stood with the two Princesses in the deep recess of the great window, when his wife and son entered; he greeted them both with a short nod of the head, and, casting a dark, unfriendly glance at Baron von Leuchtmar, who was reverentially approaching him, gave his arm to his wife, and led her to the two upper places at the oblong table.

"It seems our son can not dispense with his tutor," said he, in a low, peevish tone of voice to the Electress. "He brings his tutor to dine with us, as if it were a matter of course."

"I beg your pardon, George," whispered the Electress. "I invited the baron, whom I found in our son's room. Do me the favor to receive him affably. He has bestowed much labor and love upon our son, and has ever been a faithful servant to us."

"To you, perhaps, but not to me," muttered the Elector, while he allowed himself to sink down in his great, round

easychair, thereby giving the signal for dinner to commence.

The hours of dinner were usually those in which George William was accustomed to dismiss all the cares and anxieties of government, and to give himself up with cheerful countenance to harmless conversation with his wife and daughters. At times he even loved to carry on a lively chat with those court officials who were present at the table, or to amuse himself with hearing their recital of the events of the day or the gossip of the town. But to-day the Elector remained gloomy and taciturn. He left it to his wife to lead the conversation, and get from the Electoral Prince accounts of her dear relations at the Dutch court. The Prince answered all her questions, confining himself meanwhile to the duly necessary, and never spontaneously adding anything or entering into any details as to his own life and residence at the court of Holland. The Elector continued to listen in moody silence, and this reserve on the part of his son seemed to put him still more out of humor. His face continually grew darker, and he even disdainfully pushed away untasted his favorite dish, a wild boar's head, served up with lemons in its mouth, after it had been presented to him for the third time.

"You have been beating about the bush long enough now, Electress!" he cried warmly. "You have made inquiries after all possible things, except the principal matter and person in whom you are at bottom most interested. It might have been expected that our Electoral Prince would have begun himself, since 'out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.' But our young gentleman remains elegantly monosyllabic, and it would seem that he is not at all overjoyed upon his return to the poverty-stricken, quiet house of his father. It is true, he has lived in much handsomer style at the Orange court, lived there, indeed, amid plenty and pleasure—by the way, we can sing a little song on that subject, for our son has seen well to the outlay, but the payment all fell to the lot of us at home. But now, sir, now tell us a little of the petty court at Doornward, of our sister-in-law, the widowed Countess of the Palatinate, and finally, what I know your mother thinks the principal thing, finally tell us

also about her beautiful and fascinating daughter, the Princess Ludovicka Hollandine."

The Prince slightly shuddered. At the mention of this name, which he had not heard since his departure from The Hague, he could not prevent the ebbing of all his heart's blood, and a deadly pallor overspread his cheeks. He cast down his eyes, and yet felt that all eyes were turned upon him with questioning, curious glances. But this very consciousness restored to him his self-possession and composure. Once more he raised his head with a vigorous start, shook back into their place the brown locks which had fallen down over forehead and cheeks, and met the Elector's looks of inquiry with a full, intrepid gaze.

"Most gracious father," he said, with quiet, passionless voice, "very little can be said about the petty court of Doornward. Our aunt, the Electress of the Palatinate, reflects with sorrow upon the past; the three Princesses, her daughters, and their three little brothers, reflect with hope upon the future, and of the present therefore but little is to be told."

"They must be very beautiful, those Princesses of the Palatinate, are they not?" asked the Elector.

"I believe they are," replied the Prince composedly.

"He only believes so!" cried his father. "Just see how they have slandered him, for they would have had us believe that he knew exactly, and was quite peculiarly edified by the beauty of the Princesses of the Palatinate."

"And why should he not have been, your highness?" asked the Electress, smiling. "The Princesses of the Palatinate are our own cousins, and it seems very natural, surely, that he should have a cordial, cousinly regard for them."

"Maybe, Electress!" cried George William, "but it were to be wished that it had stopped there! I should like, therefore, to hear something about the Princess Ludovicka Hollandine. Is she, indeed, so very fair as report represents her to be?"

"Yes," replied the Prince, with husky voice—"yes, she is very fair. Only question Leuchtmar on the subject; he can confirm what I say."

"I prefer to question yourself," said the Elector, with in-

exorable cruelty, "and to learn something more concerning your fair cousin from your own lips. We have been informed that the Princess Ludovicka Hollandine is a very lively, merry young lady, and that she is by no means disinclined to become our daughter-in-law."

"But, my husband," pleaded the Electress in an undertone, "you would not speak of such confidential matters in the presence of our court, and——"

"Ah, Electress!" interrupted George William, "these confidential matters have been bruited abroad everywhere; the talk has been, not merely here at Berlin, but throughout the land, yea, even so far as the imperial court at Vienna, that our son meant to surprise us on his return from the Netherlands by presenting to us the Princess Ludovicka Hollandine as his wife, without applying to us beforehand for our consent. I therefore desire that the Electoral Prince answer me openly and candidly, that we may all know once and forever how the matter stands, and what we have to expect. The good, gossiping city of Berlin, the whole land, even the imperial court and the whole world, which seems to interest itself so much in the marriage of our Prince, will then soon have an opportunity of learning directly and reliably what is the state of affairs, and that is exactly what seems to me desirable, and was the motive for our question. Therefore, let our son tell us how matters stand between the Princess Ludovicka Hollandine and himself."

The Electoral Prince sat with downcast eyes. His cheeks were still deadly pale, and on his high, broad brow rested a threatening cloud. He put his hand around the stem of the large glass goblet before him, and held it so firmly that the glass broke with startling clangor and poured its purple wine upon the tablecloth. The shrill clinking seemed to rouse him from his reverie: with a hasty movement he threw a napkin over the red stain, and again raised his eyes, slowly and tranquilly.

"Your Electoral Highnesses desire me to tell you the truth with regard to all the reports circulated as to a marriage between the Princess Ludovicka Hollandine and myself," he said. "I will, therefore, as becomes an obedient and sub-

missive son, acquaint you with the truth. And the truth is this," he continued, with raised voice, while at the same time his cheeks became suddenly scarlet and his eyes flashed with the fire of inspiration—" the truth is this: the Princess Ludovicka Hollandine is the prettiest, sweetest woman in the whole world; happy and enviable is the man whose fortunate destiny will permit him to take her home as his bride, blessed above all men he on whom this noble, fascinating, and amiable girl bestows her love, whom she allows to enjoy the treasures of her mind and heart. Your highness said that the Princess Hollandine was not ill inclined to become your daughter-in-law. On that point I can give you no information, for I perceived nothing of this inclination; but this I can and must confess, that *I* experienced the most glowing desire to make the Princess your daughter-in-law; this I must confess, that I have loved the beautiful, witty, and charming Princess Hollandine with my whole soul and from the very depths of my heart. But never would I have ventured to make the noble Princess my wife in opposition to your will, father; and since I must admit that a union with her is not in accordance with your wishes, and that it is opposed by policy and state reasons, I have obediently submitted to your orders, and brought to you and my country the greatest and holiest of sacrifices that a man can offer: I have sacrificed my love to you, father! It has indeed been a bitter struggle with me, and I do not deny that I yet suffer, but I shall conquer my pain; yet that I can ever forget the Princess Ludovicka Hollandine, I can not promise, for he who has truly loved never forgets. You have desired me to acquaint you with the truth, father, now you know it. Let it now be blazoned forth through all Berlin, through the whole country, even as far as the imperial court of Vienna, and through the whole world. The Princess Ludovicka also will then hear of it, and the report of this confession of my love will reach her. But let rumor announce this one thing more to the Emperor, to our country, and to her: that, while the Electoral Prince Frederick William of Brandenburg could, indeed, give up a marriage with a Princess whom he loved, out of respect and obedience to his father, he never will take as his wife a princess whom he does not love, out of

obedience and respect; that the Electoral Prince thinks himself much too young and inexperienced to marry, and that he most humbly implores his father to spare him the consideration of all matrimonial projects for long years to come, since he is firmly determined not to marry yet, and this, indeed, not out of any refractoriness toward his father, nor out of any want of veneration for the princesses who might be proposed to him, but merely because his heart has received a sore wound, and because this must first heal. But I do not reproach the Princess Ludovicka Hollandine with having inflicted this wound. On the contrary, I speak it aloud, and may my speech penetrate to her ears as a parting salutation: Blessed be the Princess Ludovicka Hollandine of the Palatinate, and may God send her the happiness she deserves so richly by her beauty, intellect, and goodness of heart!"

And, carried away by his own warmth and enthusiasm, forgetting all sense of restraint in this moment of highest excitement, Frederick William jumped up from his seat, took up in his hand the unbroken cup of the glass whose foot he had smashed, and filled it to the brim with wine.

"Most gracious mother!" he cried, "look here! the base of this goblet is broken off, and an apt symbol it is of my love. With the last wine which this glass will ever hold let me drink a last farewell to my love, and do you pledge her with me: To the health of the Princess Ludovicka Hollandine of the Palatinate!"

The Electress had listened to her son with tears in her eyes, and the two Princesses also had been deeply moved by the vehement and painful recital of their brother's love. Now, upon his invitation, spoken with so much ardor and enthusiasm, the Electress rose from her seat and took her glass in her hand; the Princesses followed her example.

"To the health of the Princess Ludovicka Hollandine of the Palatinate!" said the Electress, with full, distinct voice, and the young ladies repeated it after her.

"Here is to her health!" cried Frederick William, with animated features and beaming eyes. "May she be great, happy, and blessed forever!"

At one draught he emptied the chalice, then, in the fervor

of the moment, forgetting all discretion, he threw the glass backward over his shoulder into the hall, so that it fell, with a crash, shivered to atoms, upon the floor.

The Elector rose, his face flushed with passion, and violently rolled his chair back from the table. "Dinner is over," he said. "May this meal be blessed to all!"

The court officials bowed low and withdrew. Herr von Leuchtmar also made a motion as if to go, but George William's call detained him. "Come here," he said imperiously; "I have still a couple of words to speak with you. Just tell me, Baron Leuchtmar von Kalkhun, is it you who have taught the Electoral Prince such singular manners, or are those the fine fashions which he has been used to at the Orange court? Is it the custom there to make scandal at table, and to throw glasses behind them?"

"Your Electoral Highness," replied Leuchtmar hesitatingly, "I do not know——"

"Permit me, most gracious father," interposed the Electoral Prince, while he most respectfully drew near to his father—"permit me to answer you on that point myself. No, it is not the fashion to behave so strangely at the Netherland court, and God forbid that my former tutor, Baron von Leuchtmar, should have taught me such ill manners. It was only my heart, which for the moment was stronger than any form or fashion, and I pray you to forgive it, for henceforth it shall be right good and quiet, and not even cause it to be remarked that it still beats."

The Elector only answered by a silent nod of the head, and then turned again to the baron.

"Leuchtmar," he said, "I have now a few words to address to you, and, had you not appeared here to-day, I should have been obliged to have had you summoned to-morrow to tell you what I have to say. You have brought the Electoral Prince back to us, a young gentleman, who has outgrown the schoolroom and needs no tutor; let life then receive him into its school and play the tutor for him. But he has outgrown you and your protection, and your office is herewith at an end. I might wish, indeed, to retain you still near the person of my son, and so I could have done if the Electoral Prince

had married, and we had set up a princely establishment for him, as would have become his rank. But the Electoral Prince's distinct declaration that he will not marry for some years, even if we should desire it, is welcome to us in so far as we shall not have to give him a separate household, which would have been rather hard upon us in these times of sore embarrassment. The Electoral Prince will therefore reside at our court, simply and quietly as we ourselves, and we can not provide him separate attendants. Therefore, you are honorably dismissed from your office, and it will suit us no longer to confine you to our household. You are free to seek another master, another office, and we herewith dismiss you forever from our service. It will not, indeed, be difficult for you to find another service, and, since you are so well disposed to the Swedes, you would do best to repair to The Hague, or, indeed, to Sweden itself."

"If Baron von Leuchtmar will do that," exclaimed the Electress, "he shall not want for recommendations from me, and my uncle the Stadtholder will surely esteem it a privilege to receive into his service a man so pre-eminently wise, learned, and trustworthy as Baron von Leuchtmar. I will at any time write on the subject to the Stadtholder of Holland, and tell him what a debt of gratitude we owe you, and how little able we are to requite you. We shall further entreat him to do what is, alas! impossible for us—to give you a good, honorable, and lucrative position for the whole of your life."

"I thank your highness out of a sincere soul for so great a favor," softly replied Leuchtmar. "Meanwhile I do not intend to go into any other service, but to content myself with quiet retirement in the bosom of my own family."

"Do just as you choose," said the Elector, "and may good fortune attend you everywhere. Electress, give me your arm, and let us withdraw to our own apartments. And *he*, our son, will doubtless, first of all, have to take a most touching and tearful farewell of Leuchtmar, and sing a mournful ditty about the cruel father who would take away from him his nurse—that is to say, his tutor."

"No, most gracious father," cried the Electoral Prince, laughing, "I shall sing no mournful ditty, but cheerfully

second your decision. It is quite fine to have no longer a tutor at one's side, for it makes one feel as if he were indeed a grown-up man, no more in need of a governor; and as to that touching and tearful parting, that is by no means called for. Herr von Leuchtmar and I have had some hot disputes lately on the subject of noble politics. He was too much of a Swede for me, I too much of an Imperialist for him, and those two things accord not well together, as you know yourself. Meanwhile, farewell, Baron von Leuchtmar, and for all the good you have done me accept my best thanks! And now a last embrace, and then God go with you, Herr von Leuchtmar!"

He flung his arms around Leuchtmar's neck, and pressed him closely to his heart. "Farewell, my dear friend," he whispered, "farewell; we shall meet again!"

"We shall meet again, my Brutus," said Leuchtmar, quite softly, and laid his hand upon the Prince's brow, blessing him.

Frederick William felt the tears gush from his heart to his eyes, and with a brusque movement repelled the baron. "Farewell!" he repeated hoarsely, then hurried with quick steps through the dining hall to the door.

"Frederick William, come with us!" cried the Elector, but the Prince did not or would not hear his call. He hurried through the antechamber and the long corridor, and when he had gained the solitude of his own gloomy apartments, and not until then, rang forth from his breast the long restrained scream of agony, streamed from his eyes the long-restrained tears. He sank down upon the old creaking armchair and wept bitterly.

VI.—Rebecca.

"Well, Master Gabriel Nietzel, here you are," said Count Schwarzenberg, greeting the painter, who had just entered, with a gracious nod. "And it must be granted that you are a very punctual man, for I agreed to meet you here at Span-

dow by twelve o'clock, and only hear, the clock is just now striking the hour."

"Most gracious sir, that comes from my already having stood an hour before the gates of your palace, waiting for the blessed moment to arrive when I might enter. I have been gazing this whole hour up at the dialplate of the steeple clock, and it seemed to me as if an eternity of torture would elapse while the great hour hand slowly, oh, so slowly, made its circuit of sixty minutes."

"You are a queer creature!" cried Count Schwarzenberg, shrugging his shoulders. "Romantic as a young girl, full of virtuous desires, and yet not at all loath to commit certain delicate little crimes, and to pass off copies for originals, and that not merely pictures on canvas, but pictures in flesh and blood as well. For what else is your Rebecca but the copy of a respectable, decent matron, whom you thought to smuggle in as an original, while in reality she is nothing but a copy."

"In the eyes of the law and the Stadtholder perhaps, but not in the eyes of God and of him who loves her more than his life and his eternal salvation, for he is ready, in order to possess her, to renounce even his honor and his peace of conscience. Oh, your excellency, be pitiful now and let me see my Rebecca. You have given me your word, and you will not be so cruel as to break your promise."

"I promised you nothing further than that I would intrust certain damaged pictures to you for repairing, and that I would show you a picture which might perhaps be familiar to you—that was all. I shall perform my promise, and that immediately. But first, just tell me how you are progressing with the painting I ordered of you. Perhaps you have already with you some sketch of it? It would be peculiarly pleasant to me, for on the day after to-morrow I give a *fête* in my palace at Berlin, and it would be quite opportune if I could then lay the sketch before the dear Electoral Prince, who is to honor the *fête* with his presence. He is a connoisseur, and interests himself greatly in such things. Say, then, how comes on your sketch, and can it be completed by that time?"

"It can, noble sir! But it is not possible for me to speak

about that now, for my thoughts are wandering and my heart beats as though 'twere like to burst. If I am to become a reasonable man once more, let me—first of all——"

"See the picture which I promised to show you?" interposed the count. "Well, then, you shall see it, Master Gabriel Nietzel. Remember, though, that I only show it to you on condition that you examine it in silence. So soon as you shall venture to speak to it, it vanishes, and you see it never more. One has to prescribe strict regulations to you, for you are such an odd fellow, freely entertaining bad thoughts, but shrinking from bad deeds like an innocent child. But you shall prove to me by deeds that you are in earnest about making amends for your crime against *me*, the world, the laws, and the Church. Only when you have done the right thing shall you again obtain your beloved and your child, and may depart unhindered from this country. Mark that, Master Nietzel; and now come. Follow me to my picture gallery."

He nodded smilingly to the painter, and led the way out of the cabinet and through a suite of magnificent apartments. At the end of these they entered a spacious, lofty hall, whose walls were hung with great paintings.

"This is my picture gallery," said the count on entering; "now look and be silent!"

Gabriel Nietzel remained standing near the door, and leaned against one of its pillars. He could proceed no farther, his knees shook so, and all the blood in his body seemed to concentrate in head and heart. He shut his eyes, for it seemed to him that he must expire that very moment. But finally, by a mighty effort of will, he conquered this passionate emotion, slowly opened his eyes, and ventured to cast a weary, wandering glance through the hall. How wonderfully solemn this broad, handsome room seemed to him, and how devout and prayerful was his mind! A mild, clear light fell from the glass cupola above, which alone illuminated the hall, and displayed the pictures on the walls to the best advantage. In the middle of the room, beside the splendid porphyry vase standing there upon its gilded pedestal, leaned the tall, athletic form of Count Schwarzenberg, casting a long, dark shadow upon the shining surface of the inlaid floor. Gabriel

Nietzel saw all this, and yet he felt as if he were dreaming, and that all would vanish so soon as he should venture to move or step forward. The count's voice aroused him from his stupefaction.

"Now, Master Nietzel, come here, for from this point you can best survey the pictures, and judge of their merits."

Nietzel advanced with long strides, breathless from expectation, blissful in hope. Now he stood at the count's side, and lifted his eyes to the pictures. With one rapid glance he swept the whole wall. Paintings, beautiful, costly paintings, but what cared he for *them*? Glorious in the pomp of coloring, and perfect in their truth to nature, they looked down upon him out of their broad gilt frames, but he had no senses for *them*. His eyes fastened again and again upon that broad, massive gold frame which hung opposite him in the center of the wall. The painting which this frame inclosed could not be seen, for it was hidden from view by the green silk drapery hanging before it, and at the side of the frame was suspended a string. Gabriel Nietzel saw nothing of the paintings, he only saw the green curtain, only the string which kept it fast. His whole soul spoke in the glance which he directed to them.

Count Schwarzenberg intercepted this glance and smiled.

"You are certainly thinking of Raphael's exquisite Madonna," he said, "and because that is always seen from the midst of a green curtain, you suppose, probably, that behind this curtain must also be concealed a Madonna and Child. Well, we shall see some day. Stay in your place, stir not, speak not, and perhaps a miracle will take place, and you shall behold *una Madonna col Bambino* of flesh and blood. But silence, man, for you well know how it is with treasure diggers: as soon as you speak, the treasure vanishes. Now, then, look and stand still!"

He stepped across to the wall and grasped the string. The curtain flew back and—there she stood, the Madonna with the Child in her arms, so beautiful, so instinct with life and warmth, as only nature has ever painted and art imitated from nature. There she stood with that richly tinted olive complexion, with those transparent, softly reddened cheeks,

with those full crimson lips, with those large black eyes at once full of mildness and fire, and with that broad and noble brow full of depth of thought and yet full of repose. And in her arms that sweet child, that vigorous boy so full of life, loosely clad in his little white shirt, that left bare his plump arms and firm legs. Roses were on his cheeks, dimples in his chin, and in the great black eyes lay the deep, earnest look, full of innocence and wisdom, that is sometimes peculiar to children.

The painter had sunk upon his knees, stretching out both arms to the picture, and from his eyes the tears flowed in clear streams over his cheeks. But indignantly he shook them away, for they prevented him from seeing the Madonna, *his* Madonna. Prayers he murmured up to her, prayers of love and confidence, supplications for steadfastness in danger, for courageous perseverance during separation. But he ventured not to address them audibly to the beloved Madonna, for he knew that a mere word would have snatched her away from him.

And she, she knew it too, and therefore she also was silent. Only with her eyes she spoke to him, and the tears which flowed from her eyes gave eloquent reply to his. Thus they looked at one another, at once full of bliss and pain. The child, which until now had sat quiet upon its mother's arm, silent and as if in deep thought, suddenly began to move. Its large eyes were fixed upon the man who lay there on his knees, and, whether it were the result of an involuntary movement or the instinct of love, it spread out its arms and smiled.

"My child, my darling child!" screamed Gabriel Nietzel, springing from his knees and rushing forward with outstretched arms. But the frame with its living picture hung too high—his arms could not reach it, his lips could not touch that smiling, childish mouth to press upon it a father's kiss of blessing and seal of love. "My child!" he cried again, and now, since love had once opened his lips, silence could no longer be maintained.

"Rebecca, my beloved," he cried.

"Gabriel, my beloved," sounded down.

"You have broken your word!" cried Count Schwarzen-

berg angrily, and he vehemently drew the string, so that the green curtain hastily rustled together. But it was in vain. A rounded, powerful female arm thrust it back, and now it was no more a Madonna with her Child who looked forth from the green curtain, but a glowing creature, a wife flaming with indignation and love, with defiance and grief.

"Nobody shall hinder me from looking at you, from speaking to you!" she cried. "I *will* see you, Gabriel. I *will* tell you, that I love you and am true to you. I *will* tell you that I would rather go barefoot through the world, begging with you and the child, than to live longer in this count's grand castle, amid splendor, without you. Gabriel, rescue me from this place; do all that they require of you, only take me away from here."

"Rebecca, I will rescue you, for I can not live without you—without you the world is a desert to me. You are my sun and the light of my life."

"Gabriel, release me, while yet there is time. They will make a Christian of me, and I shall renounce my faith and my salvation, in order to be with you again, but afterward I shall die of repentance."

"Rebecca, I shall release you, and I too am ready to renounce my salvation in order to be with you. But I will not die of repentance, for I shall have you again, and when I look upon you and the child I shall feel no repentance."

"Gabriel, release me, give back to me my happiness, my home, my family. For you are all that to me, and without you the world is a desert."

"Without you the world is a wilderness, Rebecca. Swear to me that you love me!"

"I swear to you, by the God of my fathers, that I love you!"

"And would you love me if the whole world despised me?"

"What matters the world to me? Would I still love you? I would love you more fervently yet if all the world despised you, for then you would be like me. They despise me too, and turn away contemptuously from me, and yet I have done nothing bad."

"Would you love me, Rebecca, even if I had committed a crime?"

"What do men call crime? Do they not say that you commit a crime in loving me? Would they not say, too, that the priest who blessed our union was a criminal? Be whatever you may, do what you will, I shall love you still. Your soul is my soul, and my heart is your heart. Release me, Gabriel, release me!"

"I will release you, Rebecca; in four days you shall be free, and we shall journey away from here, and return to Italy, never to leave it again."

"To Italy!" rejoiced she—"to my home! Oh, my Gabriel, I shall not merely love you, I shall worship you—you will be to me the Saviour, the Messiah, in whom my people have hoped so long! I——"

"Now that is enough," cried Count Schwarzenberg, who had been silent hitherto, because he felt well how much Rebecca's words forwarded his own plans. "Now that is enough of refractoriness! Come, Gabriel Nietzel, and you, Rebecca, step back, or I shall have your child taken away, and you shall never see it again!"

"Go, Rebecca, go!" cried Gabriel Nietzel cheerfully. "You remain with me, even if you go, and I shall still see and speak to you when I am far from you. Four days only, and then we shall be reunited!"

"I am going, Gabriel! I shall spend all these four days praying for you—to your and my God!"

"Sir Count!" cried Nietzel in cheerful tones—"Sir Count, let us now return to your cabinet. I have something important to communicate to you."

He cast not another look up at the curtain; he had no longer any sense of pain in her disappearance, but this was his one absorbing thought, that in four days he would again embrace his Rebecca, and that it lay in the power of his own hands to deserve her. With firm steps he followed the count, who now again led him out of the hall and into his cabinet.

"Well, speak, Master Gabriel!" cried the count; "what have you to say to me?"

Nietzel drew a paper from his breast pocket, and handed

it to the count. "See, your excellency, here is the sketch of the painting I am to make for you."

"Truly, a precious sketch," said Schwarzenberg, examining the paper attentively. "That looks like a Holy Supper."

"It is no Holy Supper, but a very unholy dinner."

"In the middle of the table I see sitting a man and a youth. The man wears a crown upon his head and the youth wears a princely coronet."

"It is the Elector and the Electoral Prince," explained Gabriel Nietzel.

"Yes, indeed, the portraits are theirs. And beside them sits the Electress, and beside her I see myself, and quite gorgeously have you dressed me, with a princely ermined mantle about my shoulders and a prince's diadem upon my brow. But what is that which I hold in my hand and offer to the Electress?"

"It is a lachrymatory, your excellency."

"And yet the Electress smiles, Sir Painter."

"She takes the lachrymatory for a golden vase, which your excellency is presenting to her as a present."

"You are witty, it seems, Master Gabriel," said the count sharply. "But that your portraits are good must be admitted, and your sketch is altogether charming. Only you have sketched for me there a joyous festival, and, if I remember rightly, I ordered of you a picture which should represent the death of Julius Cæsar, or some such murderous occasion. But I see no dagger and no murderer in this sketch."

"Only look at that man standing behind the Electoral Prince."

"Ah, I see him now. Why, master, that is your own likeness!"

"Yes, your excellency, my own likeness. You grant me your permission, then, to appear at the feast?"

"Why not? Paul Veronese, too, has introduced his own portrait among those of his banqueters. What is your image there handing to the Electoral Prince in that basket?"

"A piece of white bread, most gracious sir, nothing more."

"Ah, a piece of white bread! You have become, it seems, the young Electoral Prince's lackey, have laid your character

as artist upon the shelf, and become body page to the gracious Prince?"

"It seems so, most gracious sir," replied Nietzel with solemn voice. "But see here, the truth lies on this page."

And he handed the count a second sheet of paper.

"What do I see? Something seems to have disturbed the banquet."

"Yes, your excellency, very greatly disturbed it. Do you still see the man who stood behind the Electoral Prince?"

"No, I see him nowhere."

"He has fled, your excellency. He is the murderer of the Electoral Prince, who is borne out senseless."

"Of the Electoral Prince? Conrad the Third, you mean! For was it not the murder of the last of the Hohenstaufens which you promised me?"

"Yes, your excellency, and I will perform my promise if the sketch pleases you."

"It pleases me very much, and it suits me perfectly," replied the count, whose glance remained ever directed to the two sketches. "Yes, yes," he continued slowly, "I understand, and the design has my approval, for it is simple and natural. You have your plan complete in your head?"

"Quite complete, your excellency."

"Then it is not necessary to talk any more about it, or to preserve the sketches," said the count, slowly tearing the two papers into little bits.

"You are right, count, it is not necessary to preserve the sketches, since I soon expect to carry them out on a large scale. But we have something else to talk about, your excellency."

Schwarzenberg looked in amazement at the painter, whose voice had now lost its reverential expression, and was very firm and determined.

"We have only to speak upon such subjects as I may choose, master," he said haughtily.

"No, Sir Count," retorted Nietzel decidedly; "but we have to speak about what follows the completion of my painting. We must speak of *that*, even should it not please your excellency. On Sunday your banquet takes place; on that

day I should like to set off for Italy with my wife and child, and leave Germany forever."

"Do so, Master Nietzel, I strongly advise you to do so."

"Will your excellency condescend to assist me thereto?"

"Joyfully, from the bottom of my heart, my dear Nietzel. You would travel to Italy. First of all you want funds for your journey, I suppose. Here, Master Nietzel, here I transmit to you a pocketbook containing twelve hundred dollars—your pension, which I pay you in advance for two years."

"I thank your excellency," said Gabriel, taking the pocketbook. "The principal thing, though, is, how am I to get at my wife and child? Am I to come here to fetch them away?"

"Not so, Master Nietzel. I shall send Rebecca and the child to you at your lodgings in Berlin."

"Before or after the banquet?"

"After the banquet, of course."

"But if you do not do so, your excellency. If you should forget your promise to poor Gabriel Nietzel?"

"Ah! you mistrust me, do you, Mr. Gabriel Nietzel?"

"Do you not mistrust me, too, Sir Count? Have you not taken my Rebecca and my child as pledges for my keeping my word? Have you not deprived me of what is most precious to me in this world, not to be restored until I have fulfilled my oath to you? But what pledge have I that you will keep your word, and what means have I for forcing you to fulfill your oath to me?"

"You have my word as security—the word of a nobleman, who has never yet forfeited his pledge," said Count Schwarzenberg solemnly. "I swear to you that on the day of the banquet your Rebecca and your child shall be at your lodgings in Berlin, and that you will find them there on your return from the banquet. I swear this by the Holy Virgin Mary and by Jesus Christ the only-begotten Son, and in affirmation of my solemn oath I lay my right hand here upon this crucifix."

The count strode across to his escritoire, and laid his hand upon the crucifix of alabaster and gold, which stood upon it. "I swear and vow," he cried, "that next Sunday

I shall send to Gabriel Nietzel's lodging his Rebecca and her child, and that he shall find them there when he returns from the banquet. Are you content now, Master Gabriel Nietzel?"

"I am content, Sir Count. Farewell! And God grant that we may never meet again on earth!"

He greeted the count with a passing inclination of his head, and left the apartment without waiting for his dismissal.

VII.—The Offer.

"And now," murmured Gabriel Nietzel to himself, as he stepped out upon the street—"now for work, without hesitancy and without delay, for there is no other way of escaping from that cruel tiger who has me in his clutches. He is athirst for blood, and I must sacrifice to him the blood of another man in order to save that of my wife and child! But, woe to him, woe, if he does not keep his word, if he acts the part of traitor toward me! But I will not think of that, I dare not think of it, for I have need of all my presence of mind in order to prepare everything. First, I must speak to the Electoral Prince; that is the most important thing."

He went back to Berlin, and repaired forthwith to the palace. The Electoral Prince was at home, and the lackey who had announced the court painter Gabriel Nietzel now reverentially opened for him the door of the princely apartment.

"Well, here you are, my dear Gabriel," cried the Electoral Prince affably. "Welcome, to receive my thanks for the zeal and dispatch with which you attended to the removal of my effects. Truly you merit praise, for I am told that you arrived in Berlin before me. We had contrary winds, it is true, and had to lie at anchor before Cuxhaven for fourteen days. Well, say, master, how are you pleased with Berlin?"

"Very well, your highness," replied Nietzel gloomily, looking into the pale, sad countenance of the Electoral Prince with a glance full of strange meaning.

"Why do you look so inquiringly at me, master?" asked the Prince restively.

"Pardon me, most gracious sir, I will not do so again," said Gabriel, casting down his eyes. "I have something to say to your highness, and I would fain gather the needed courage therefor from your countenance."

"Do so then, master, look at me and speak."

"Step into the middle of the room, gracious sir, and permit me to come close to you; then I will speak, for I shall know then that no one can overhear us."

The Electoral Prince did as Gabriel requested. The latter stepped close up to his side. "Most gracious sir," said he, "have you confidence in me?"

"Yes, Gabriel Nietzel, I have confidence in you."

"Then hear what I have to tell you. Ask no questions, require no intelligence and explanations. Hear my warning, and act accordingly. Count Schwarzenberg plots against your life!"

"Do you believe that?" said the Electoral Prince, smiling.

"He has invited you to a feast, which is to take place on Sunday. At that feast you are to be poisoned."

The Electoral Prince started, and a transient flush gleamed upon his cheeks. "Whence know you that, Gabriel Nietzel?"

"I beseech you ask me no questions, but believe me. Will your highness do so?—dare I speak further?"

"Well, I will believe you. Speak further, Master Gabriel."

"I told you thus much, that you were to be poisoned at Count Adam von Schwarzenberg's banquet. The count's valet has been bribed by him; he will have the honor of waiting upon you at the feast, and he will therefore present to you all you eat or drink, even down to the bread. Do not accept them from him, your highness, especially the bread."

"I shall at least eat nothing, Gabriel Nietzel."

"When he sees that, he will offer you some fruit or viand which will prove hurtful to you. The count's valet must not stand behind your seat, that is the principal thing; another must take his place, another, on whose fidelity you may rely."

"Who is that other? Where is the man to be found in these parts on whose fidelity I may rely?"

"You may rely upon me, Prince. I will stand behind your chair, I will wait upon you at Count Schwarzenberg's feast."

"You, Gabriel Nietzel, you?" asked Frederick William, and his eyes were fixed upon the painter with a long glance of inquiry. Gabriel Nietzel sustained this glance, and succeeded in forcing a smile upon his lips.

"I will be your valet at the feast. I will stand behind your chair and wait upon you."

"Impossible, Gabriel. How could we manage that without insulting the count?"

"Very simply, your highness. Have the kindness to say that you brought me with you, in order that I might make for you a painting of the banquet, and to that end sketch the outlines, and that, to furnish a pretext for my presence, you have allowed me to appear as your page."

"It is true, that will suit! You have weighed all excellently, Gabriel Nietzel, and your plan is good."

And you accept it, gracious sir, do you not, you accept it?"

Frederick William was silent, and his large, deep-blue eyes were again fixed testingly and questioningly upon the painter's countenance. After a long pause he slowly laid his hand upon Gabriel's shoulder, and his looks brightened.

"Gabriel Nietzel," he said solemnly, "I will have confidence in you, I will assume that God sends you to me to save me; I will *not* assume that Count Schwarzenberg sends you to me to ruin me. You shall accompany me to the feast and stand behind my chair as page."

Gabriel Nietzel only answered by the tears, which in clear streams gushed from his eyes. "Oh, you weep," cried the Electoral Prince. "Now I see well that you mean honestly, and that I can trust you, for your tears speak for you."

Just then the lackey opened the door of the antechamber and announced, "The commandant of Küstrin, Colonel von Burgsdorf, wishes to pay his respects!"

"Let him wait an instant; I will summon him directly."

"Most gracious sir," murmured Nietzel, when the door had again closed, "dismiss me in the colonel's presence, and immediately, that the spies may not have it to say that there has been to-day a meeting of Count Schwarzenberg's enemies here."

"Are there spies here too, Gabriel?"

"Everywhere, sir, each of your servants is bribed, and you must suspect them. Dismiss me, sir, dismiss me."

The Electoral Prince went to the door and opened it.

"Colonel von Burgsdorf, come in!"

"Here I am, most gracious sir, here I am!" cried Burgsdorf's rough voice, and with clashing sword and glittering corselet Conrad von Burgsdorf entered the room. The Electoral Prince nodded to him, and then turned to the painter, who humbly and with lowered head had crept away toward the door. "Master Nietzel," he said, with a condescending wave of the hand, "go now, and be careful to carry out my instructions. I will request my mother to do me the kindness to sit to you every day for her portrait, which you are to paint for me. Make all your preparations, and come early to-morrow morning with the canvas stretched."

"Your highness's commands shall be punctually executed," said Gabriel Nietzel, and, after reverentially bowing, he left the room.

"And now for you, my dear Burgsdorf!" cried the Electoral Prince, advancing a few paces to meet the colonel, and kindly offering him his hand. "You are heartily welcome, and let me hope that I, too, am welcome to you and your friends."

"Your highness, you are more than welcome to us—you have been longed for by us, and we thank God from the depths of our souls that he has finally given you back to us. All had already abandoned hope of your return to us. All really believed that you would forsake us in our wretchedness and want, and would never more return to the unhappy Mark of Brandenburg. But here you are at last, my dearest young sir, and blessed be your coming and your staying."

"I thank you, colonel, thank you with my whole heart for your good wishes," said Frederick William kindly; "and

trust me, my dear colonel, I know how to treasure them, and will never forget you for these. You are one of the faithful ones, on whom our house can count in evil as in good days, and on whom an Elector of Brandenburg would never call in vain, if he had need of him."

"Call upon us, most gracious sir," said the colonel briskly and joyfully—"call all your faithful ones, and you shall see they will all come, for they are only waiting for your summons."

The Electoral Prince smilingly shook his head. "I am not the Elector of Brandenburg, and I have not the right to summon you."

"You shall and must be Elector of Brandenburg, and that you may be so, you must gather your faithful ones around you."

"I do not understand you," said the Electoral Prince slowly. "Whether I will ever be Elector of Brandenburg, God only can decide, for in his hands lies my father's life as well as my own. May the day be far distant when I enter upon the succession—may my venerated father for long years to come rule his land in peace and tranquillity. I long not to grasp the reins of government, for I know very well that I am yet much too young to guide them with wisdom and prudence."

"You will not understand me, your highness," cried the colonel impatiently, and his red swollen face glowed with a brighter hue. "But I must still try to make you understand, for to that very end have I been sent hither by your friends; they have chosen me as spokesman for them all, and therefore I must speak, if your highness will grant me leave so to do."

"Speak, my dear colonel, speak, and may God enlighten my heart, that I may rightly understand you! Let us sit down, colonel, and now let us hear what is the matter."

"This is the matter, your highness, the Mark of Brandenburg is lost to you, if you do not seize it now with swift, determined hand. You do not believe me, sir; you shake your head incredulously and smile. Ah! I see plainly, that you have been suffered to remain in great darkness as regards the

situation of affairs here, and you know very little of our sufferings and our distresses. You know not that poverty and want prevail throughout the whole land; that the peasant, the burgher, the nobleman, all classes of the people, in short, are equally oppressed; that trade and commerce lie prostrate; and the aim of each one is only how he may prolong a wretched existence from day to day."

"Nevertheless, my dear colonel, I know that. I saw enough solitary, ruined villages, waste and empty towns, uncultivated and ravaged fields on my journey hither to prove to me what the poor inhabitants of the Mark have had to suffer in these evil days of war."

"Have had to suffer, says your highness?" cried Burgsdorf impatiently; "they still suffer continuously, and their suffering will be without cessation or end if your highness does not take pity upon the poor people, upon us all."

"I?" asked Frederick William, astonished. "What then can I do?"

"You can do everything, my Prince, everything, and in the name of your future country, in the name of your subjects, I beseech you to do so. The Mark Brandenburg stands upon the brink of a precipice. Save it, Electoral Prince. The religion, policy, and independence of Brandenburg are in danger; take your sword in hand and save her. Speak three words, three little insignificant words, and all the noblemen in the Mark will rally exultingly about you, and the people will flock to you in crowds, and make you so mighty and so strong that you need only to will and your will shall be executed."

"What three words are those, Sir Colonel von Burgsdorf?"

"Those three words, your highness, which the people shouted up at the palace window yesterday, when you got home. The three words, 'Down with him!'"

"Down with *him*," repeated the Electoral Prince. "And who is this *him?*"

"It is Count Schwarzenberg, your highness—it is the minister who rules here in the Mark as if it were his own property, and as if he were not your father's Stadtholder, but

the reigning Prince, who had obtained the Mark as a fief from the Emperor of Germany, to whom alone he were responsible. Look about you, Frederick William, look at these poor, wretched apartments, in which you live—look at the decay of the princely house, the embarrassments with which your father has to contend, and the privations which your mother and sisters have to undergo. And then, Prince, then look across at Broad Street, at Count Schwarzenberg's palace. There all is glory and splendor, there are to be seen lackeys in golden liveries, costly equipages, handsomely furnished halls. They practice wanton luxury, they live amid pomp and pleasure, arrange magnificent hunts and splendid entertainments, while the people cry out for hunger. They make merry in Count Schwarzenberg's palace, and while the burgher, whose last cent he has seized for the payment of taxes and imposts, creeps about in rags, *he* struts by in velvet clothes, decked out with gold and precious stones, and laughingly boasts that half the Mark of Brandenburg might be bought at the price of one of his court suits. Most gracious Prince, yesterday the steward of your father, with the Electoral consent, brought out the velvet caps which had been kept in the Electoral wardrobe, took off the genuine silver lace with which they were trimmed, and sold it to the Jews, in order to pay the servants their month's wages,* and the count's servants yesterday received new liveries, so thickly set with gold lace that the scarlet cloth was hardly distinguishable underneath. The Stadtholder in the Mark revels in superfluity, while the Elector in the Mark almost suffers want, and esteems himself happy if he can give one piece of land after another to his minister as security for the payment of debt. Oh, it is enough to drive one to despair, and make him tear his hair for rage and grief, when he sees the state of things here, and must perceive that the Elector is nothing and the Stadtholder everything. To his adherents he gives offices and dignities, and those whom he knows to be attached to the interests of the Electoral family he removes from court, and replaces by his favorites and servants. Upon the Colonels von Kracht and von Rochow he

* Historical. *Vide* King, Description of Berlin, part 1.

has bestowed good positions, making them commandants of Berlin and Spandow, with double salaries, but me, whom he knows to be the faithful servant of the Electoral family, he has banished from court and sent to Küstrin with only half as high a salary as the other two have. From the Electoral privy council he has also removed all those gentlemen who were bold enough to lift up their voices against him, and has introduced such men as say yes to everything that he desires and asks. No longer does an honest, upright word reach the Electoral ear, and while the whole people lament and cry out against Schwarzenberg, fearing him as they do the devil himself, our Elector fancies that his Stadtholder is as much beloved by the people of the Mark Brandenburg as by the Emperor at Vienna. But it is just so; Catholics and Imperialists will Schwarzenberg make us; ever he presses us further and further from our comrades in the faith, the Swedes and Dutch; ever he draws us closer to the Catholics; and if he could succeed in making the Elector Catholic, removing all Evangelists and Reformers from court, and putting Catholics in their places, then he would rejoice and obtain a high reward from the Emperor and Pope."

"And you believe, Burgsdorf, that he will do such a thing, and esteem such a thing possible?" asked the Electoral Prince, with a sly smile.

"I believe that he will, and we all believe so. And with the Stadtholder to will is to do, for he carries through all that he undertakes. But we will not suffer it, Prince, we will not be turned into Imperialists and Catholics. We will hold to our Elector and our religion; we will not suffer and submit to our Elector's being any longer in dependence upon Emperor and empire, and nothing at all but a powerless tool in Schwarzenberg's hands. We want a free Elector, who has courage and power to defy the Emperor himself, and league himself with the Swedes against him. For the Swedes are our rightful allies, not merely because the mother of the little Queen Christina is sister to our Elector, but also because we are neighbors, and of one religion and one faith. Oh, my gracious young sir, do not allow Schwarzenberg to make us Catholics and Imperialists! Free your country, your subjects, and your-

self from this man, who weighs upon us like a scourge from God!"

"But, Burgsdorf, just consider what you say there. I, who have but just returned from a three years' absence, I, who am almost a stranger to these combinations and circumstances, *I* am to free you from this most mighty and influential man, the Stadtholder in the Mark! I should like to know how to go about it."

"Gracious sir, I will tell you," replied Burgsdorf, with smothered voice and coming close up to the Prince. "Only say that you will place yourself at our head; give me only a couple of words in your own handwriting to give assurance to your friends and adherents that you will at their head battle for your good rights and for the faith and law of the land. Do this, and then just wait eight days."

"And what will happen after these eight days?"

"Then will happen that you shall see an army assembled about you, my Prince, in eight days. We have all been long making our preparations in secret, and putting everything in position, to be able to break forth as soon as you should appear and place yourself at our head. Every nobleman belonging to our party has procured arms and ammunition for the equipment of his people, and a brave, well-appointed host will be ready to execute your orders. You will take Schwarzenberg prisoner in his proud palace; you will be able by persistency to drive the Elector to dismiss the hated minister and his hated son from their offices and dignities, and to banish them forever from the country. You will be able to force the Elector to nominate you Schwarzenberg's successor, and then, having the power in your own hands, it only depends upon yourself to break with the Emperor, to recognize the peace of Prague no longer, but to renew the alliance with the Swedes, and united with them to battle against the encroachments of the Emperor, and in behalf of religion!"

"Just see, colonel, you have your plan already cut and dried!" cried the Prince. "If I should accede to it I would have nothing further to do than to execute what you have previously determined and arranged, and I should be nothing more than a tool in your hands. Now, I must confess to you

that such a part would not at all suit me, even if I were ready to fall in with your plans. But I am not ready to do so, and am thoroughly indisposed to accept your proposition."

"You are not inclined to do so?" asked the colonel, shocked. "Not even," he continued more softly, "when I tell you that the Electress knows our plans and consents to them?"

"Not even then, colonel. However much I love my mother, yet in this matter I can not suffer myself to be guided by her wishes. No, Colonel von Burgsdorf, I am not minded to go into your plans; for have you well considered what you require of me? You ask me to head a revolution, to give you a deed of rebellion, and to call upon the noblemen of the country to revolt against their rightful Sovereign. You ask me, as a rebel and agitator, and yet at the same time only as your tool, to do force and violence to my lord and father, and to force him to dismiss his minister, to alter his system, and to make enemies of his friends and friends of his enemies. Truly, you offer me a great advantage in prospective, and are good enough to propose that I step into Count Schwarzenberg's place and rule the country in the Elector's name, as he has done. But I am not blind to my own shortcomings, and do not overestimate myself. I know very well that I am as yet but an inexperienced young man, who has still a great deal to learn, and is by no means in a position to take the place of so distinguished and adroit a statesman as Count Schwarzenberg. I must yet go to school to him, and learn from him statecraft and policy."

"Will you learn from him, gracious sir?" cried Burgsdorf passionately. "Would you go to school to him, to that Catholic, that Imperialist?"

"Tell me a better schoolmaster for my father's son?" asked the Electoral Prince softly. "My father has bestowed full confidence upon him for these twenty years past, he has adhered firmly and faithfully to him in evil as well as in prosperous days, and therefore I conclude that the count is worthy of this unshaken confidence, and must well deserve his master's love. It would, therefore, be very disrespectful behavior on my part toward my father, and put me in the light of ex-

alting myself against him in unchildlike disobedience, if I should make the attempt to remove Count Schwarzenberg from his side by force. The Elector alone is reigning Sovereign within his own dominions, and what he concludes must be good, and it does not become us to censure or presume to know better."

"Your grace, then, will be nothing but an obedient and submissive son?" asked Burgsdorf in a cutting tone.

"Nothing further, Burgsdorf," replied Frederick William quietly. "May my father yet live to rule long years in peace; I am still young, I am learning and waiting."

"You are learning and waiting," cried Burgsdorf, beside himself, "and meanwhile your land is going wholly to ruin; the people are hungry and in despair; the noblemen are reduced to beggary or have, in their desperation, gone over to Schwarzenberg—that is to say, to the Emperor—who pays a rich annuity to each one who adheres faithfully to him. And when your grace has waited and learned enough, then will come the day when Count Schwarzenberg will hunt you from your heritage, even as he has hunted the Margrave of Jägerndorf; then will the Emperor give the Mark Brandenburg away, as he has done with Jägerndorf, and his favorite, Schwarzenberg, is here ready to receive the welcome donation. He has already ruled the Mark Brandenburg twenty years in the Emperor's name, why should he not rule the Mark as its independent Sovereign? Oh, gracious sir, it makes me raving mad just to think of it, and I can not believe that you are in earnest, that you actually thrust from you myself and those loyal to you, and will not enter into our plans. My dear Prince, I have known you all your life. I have carried you in my arms as a little boy; I have borne you under my cloak when you went with your mother to Küstrin; I have staked upon you all the hopes of my life; and it would be a bitter grief to me to be obliged to think that you will have nothing to do with me and all your friends."

"And think you, man," asked the Electoral Prince, "that it would be no grief to my father if I should step forward as his adversary? Think you that it would make for him a good name in history should the son present himself as his

father's enemy? No, Burgsdorf; I repeat it to you, I am learning and waiting."

"And I? I have waited twenty years, to learn in this hour that all my waiting has been in vain. The Mark is lost, and you, Electoral Prince, with it. I shall tell your mother, I shall tell your friends, that you are lost to us. Farewell, sir, and, if you will, go to Count Schwarzenberg and tell him that I am a traitor and conspirator. I shall go back to Küstrin, and if I were not ashamed, I could weep over myself and you. No, I am not ashamed; look, sir, at least you have constrained me."

And the tears gushed from his eyes and fell down upon his grizzly, gray beard. He clapped his hands before his face and sobbed aloud. The Electoral Prince turned pale. He fixed a glance full of confidence and love upon the colonel, and had already opened his lips for an answer, which he would probably have afterward repented, when Burgsdorf suddenly drew his hands from before his face and angrily shook his head.

"I am a fool!" he said furiously, "and it would serve me right, old baby that I am, if you should laugh at me. Farewell!"

He made a formal military salute, turned abruptly and crossed the apartment to the door. Now, when his hand was already upon the latch, the Electoral Prince made a few steps forward. Colonel Burgsdorf turned about.

"Did you call me, sir?"

"No, colonel, farewell!"

The door closed, and Frederick William was alone. His large blue eyes were directed toward heaven with a look of inexpressible grief.

"I have in this hour offered up a greater sacrifice than Abraham, when he sacrificed his son to his God," he whispered. "Has God accepted my sacrifice, will he in his mercy some day reward me for it?"

VIII.—The Banquet.

The city of Berlin was to-day in a state of unusual stir and excitement. Everybody made haste to finish his noonday meal, and nobody thought of complaining especially that this repast was so sparingly provided and served in such small portions, and that the dread specter of hunger was ever stalking nearer to the inhabitants of the unhappy, much-plagued town. They were to-day looking forward to a spectacle—one, moreover, for which no money was to be paid, which could be had gratis, just by being upon the street in right time and struggling to obtain a good position on the cathedral square, before the palace, or much better, before Count Schwarzenberg's palace. For to-day the count gave a great banquet in his palace on Broad Street, and it was well worth the trouble of contending for a place before the palace, and not even being frightened by a few cuffs and blows. The whole fashionable world of Berlin, all the nobility of the regions round about, were invited to this feast, and the whole court was to appear there. And it was so rarely that the Electoral family was ever to be seen by the town. They had passed almost a year in the Mark, but in such quiet and retirement did they live that their presence would hardly have been recognized if on Sunday in the cathedral church, which stood in the center of the square between the palace and Broad Street, their lofty personages had not been discernible behind the glass panes of the Electoral gallery. But to-day they were not to be seen in the seriousness of devotion, with their solemn, church-going faces, but in the pomp and splendor of their exalted station, in the glitter of their earthly greatness. And, above all things, they were to see the Electoral Prince, the Prince who had but just returned home, the hope of the downtrodden land, the future of the Mark Brandenburg!

How the good people hurried with joyful, eager faces along toward Broad Street, with what hasty movements did they rush across the Spree Bridge! A black, surging throng of men stood before the castle on the cathedral square, a dense,

motionless mass before Count Schwarzenberg's palace. Only one passage was left free, broad enough to allow the carriage to drive across the castle square to the palace, and on both sides of this stood the halberdiers of the Stadtholder's bodyguard, threateningly presenting their halberds toward those who ventured to step forward. The Stadtholder in the Mark had his own bodyguard—fine, athletic fellows, of proud bearing, in splendid uniforms, trimmed everywhere with genuine gold and silver lace, while, as everybody knew, the members of the Electoral bodyguard wore nothing but imitation lace upon their uniforms. The Elector's bodyguard, indeed, were paid and clothed by citizens, and they, on account of their want and distress, had refused to pay the last bodyguard tax, while the Stadtholder's bodyguard consisted of members of his household and was paid and clothed by himself. And Count Schwarzenberg was very rich, and the citizens were very poor, but still the count had never once practiced mildness and mercy, and relieved the poor cities of their taxes and imposts, or given of his wealth to their poverty.

To-day, however, he gave a *fête*, a splendid *fête*, and however much at other times they dreaded and hated him, his *fête* they could still look upon, and with longing eyes behold all its magnificence. It was, indeed, glorious to look upon, and they saw, moreover, how much the Stadtholder honored and esteemed the Elector, for never before had he displayed such splendor, when he merely invited the high nobility. Above the grand door of entrance was stretched a canopy of crimson cloth, edged with gold, the golden pillars of the canopy reaching out even into the street. The four stone steps leading from the front door were covered with fine carpeting, which also stretched away to the street, to the spot where the guests were to alight from their carriages. On both sides of the carpet stood serried ranks of the Stadtholder's lackeys in their flashy gold-trimmed liveries. They were headed by the count's two stewards, with golden wands in their hands, broad gold bands about their shoulders, and monstrous three-cornered hats upon their heads. It was very fine to look upon, and not merely the merry urchins, who were swinging upon the iron railings of the count's park,

opposite the palace on the side of the cathedral square, enjoyed the spectacle, but the respectable burgher, with his well-dressed wife upon his arm, found his pleasure in it as well. The front doors were wide open, and they could look into the gorgeous columned hall, decorated with garlands and vases of fresh flowers. Yes, it was plainly to be seen that the Stadtholder felt himself greatly honored by the high company he was to receive to-day, and this even reconciled the good people a little to the proud, imperious Count Schwarzenberg.

And now the distinguished guests came riding up. There were the noblemen from the country round about, in their antiquated, rumbling vehicles, drawn by beautiful, handsomely harnessed horses. There were the Quitzows, the Götzes and Krockows, the Bülows and Arnims, and as often as a carriage arrived the musicians, stationed on both sides of the palace, blew a flourishing peal of trumpets, and the noblemen bowed right and left, greeting, although no one had greeted them except Count Schwarzenberg's chamberlain, von Lehndorf, who received the guests upon the threshold of the house. But now resounded a loud shouting and huzzaing, rolling nearer and ever nearer, like a monstrous wave, and an unusual, joyful movement pervaded the densely packed mass of men. "They come! they come!" sounded from mouth to mouth, and small people raised themselves on tiptoe, and tall ones turned their heads toward the corner of the cathedral square. Already they saw the foot runner, with his plumed hat and golden staff, as he came bounding on, then the two forerider in their bright blue liveries, with low, round caps upon their heads, and then the electoral equipage, the great gilded coach of state, drawn by four black horses.

"Who is sitting in the coach of state? Is the Electoral Prince in it? Does he come in the same carriage with his father?"

The people grew dumb from impatience and expectancy, in the midst of their cries of joy; they wanted to see! All eyes shone with curiosity as the equipage rolled on. Over in the park, behind the railing, stood the drummers, and they began to beat a roll, which the boys riding on the railing seconded with genuine rapture. The trumpeters blew a flourish,

and now Count Schwarzenberg himself issued from the broad palace door, followed by his son, the young Count John Adolphus. Ah! how glorious to behold was the Stadtholder in the Mark in his official costume as Grand Master of the Order of St. John, his breast quite covered with the stars of the order, whose gems glittered and sparkled so wondrously; and how handsome looked the young count, in his white suit of silver brocade, with puffs of purple velvet, his short, ermine-edged mantle of purple velvet, confined at the shoulders by clasps. The two counts made haste down the steps to the equipage. The Stadtholder in his amiable impatience opened the carriage door himself, and offered the Elector George William both his hands to assist him in alighting. And now, laboriously, gasping, with flushed face, and a forced smile upon his lips, the Elector dismounted from his carriage. Leaning upon his favorite's arm, slowly and clumsily he moved forward to the house, his stout, lofty form bent, his gait heavy, and his blue eyes, which were only once turned to the gaping multitude, sad—oh, so sad! The people looked with pity and compassion upon the poor, peevish gentleman, who, in spite of the great Prince's star upon his breast and the Electoral hat with its waving plumes, was not by far so splendid to behold as the proud, stately Count Adam, who strode along at his side.

While the Stadtholder was conducting the Elector into the palace, the Electress alighted from the carriage, the two young Princesses following her. A loud cry of joy and admiration rang out, and called a smile to the lips of the Electress, a deep blush to the cheeks of the Princesses. The Electress's robe, with its long train of gold brocade, was wondrous to behold, and above it the blue velvet mantle with black ermine trimmings; and how beautifully the diadem of diamonds and sapphires gleamed and sparkled on the brown hair of the Princess! Again the Stadtholder came out of the palace with hasty steps, flew to the Electress, and offered her his arm, to lead her into the palace. Nor need the two Princesses walk alone behind; they, too, have their knight—young Count Schwarzenberg, who had received the Electress. He offered his arm to the Princess Charlotte Louise, which she

accepted with a lovely smile and a becoming blush. Ah! what a handsome couple that was, and how remarkably their dress corresponded, for the Princess was also dressed in silver brocade, and from her shoulders fell a mantle of purple velvet edged with ermine. The little Princess Sophie Hedwig stepped behind her. But who was this young man, who suddenly stepped forward, made his way through the throng, and offered her his arm? Nobody had seen him or observed him, and he had come on foot, accompanied by a single page. Who was this handsome young man, in light-blue velvet suit, who with the young Princess on his arm mounted the steps with her, laughing merrily.

"It is he! It is the Electoral Prince! It is Frederick William! Cheers for our Electoral Prince! Hurrah for Frederick William! Welcome, welcome home! Long live our Electoral Prince!"

Within the hall, at the window, stood the Elector, and these shouts emanating from thousands of throats darkened his countenance. The people had kept silence when their Sovereign showed himself to them, and now they exulted on seeing his son!

Without, at the head of the steps, stood the Electoral Prince, and the shouting of so many thousand voices summoned a glad smile to his face. How handsome he was, and what a happiness it was to look at him! How like a lion's mane fell his thick, fair brown hair on both sides of his narrow oval face, how like brilliant stars sparkled his large, dark-blue eyes, and what bold thoughts were written upon his broad, clear brow! And how stately and impressive was his figure, too—how slender, and yet how firm and athletic! Yes, those broad shoulders were well fitted to bear the burden of government, and behind that breast beat surely a strong, great heart!

"Long live the Electoral Prince! Three cheers! Long live Frederick William!"

He bowed once more, nodding and bestowing kind greetings upon those on both sides, then entered the palace, followed by his page in black velvet suit.

Who is that page? Nobody observes him, nobody has

looked at him. Who troubles himself about the servant when he looks at the master?—who asks why the page's face is so pale, why his glance so feverish and restless? Very few know the court painter Gabriel Nietzel, and those who do know him will surely never imagine that it is he who to-day acts as page to the Electoral Prince Frederick William. He mingles with the host of gold-bedizened servants and lackeys in the entrance hall, and follows them into the banqueting hall. The doors of the house are closed; for the gaping crowd without the festival is ended, for the high-born guests within it is but just begun. The two wings of the doors leading into the banqueting hall are thrown open by the halberdiers, the musicians in the gilded balcony to the rear blow a loud, dashing flourish, and the Elector enters the hall, followed by the Electress, who leans upon the arm of Count Schwarzenberg. On both sides of the hall stand the lords and ladies of the nobility, who bow down to the ground, nothing being visible but the bowed necks of men, the courtesying forms of women—all is reverence, solemnity, and silence. In the middle of the long table, just before that immense, solid mirror of Venetian crystal, are the places of the Electoral pair, as may be seen by those throne-like armchairs, on whose tall, straight backs is carved a golden crown—as may be seen by the glittering gold plate of both covers.

How gorgeously is the long table laid, nothing to be seen but gold and silver plate! In the center is a huge piece of chased silver, representing Cupids and genii, who in golden shells, cornucopias, and vases offer the rarest fruits, the most delicious confections! Before each lady's plate, in wondrously cut goblets, is a magnificent bouquet of flowers; before each gentleman's, a silver bowl. A gold-bedizened lackey is behind each chair; two stand behind the chairs of each of their Electoral Highnesses.

"Why stands that page behind the Electoral Prince's chair?" asks the Stadtholder, loud enough to be heard by the Prince, who is near him.

Frederick William breaks off in the midst of his conversation with the young Count John Adolphus, and turns smilingly to the Stadtholder.

"Pardon, your grace," says he kindly. "I wished to preserve a memento of this handsome entertainment, the first entertainment by which my return home has been solemnized, and with my father's permission I have brought with me the court painter Gabriel Nietzel, in order that he may look upon the feast and make a sketch of the scene. Since, of course, he could have no place at the table, he has assumed a page's garb, that he may have the privilege of standing behind my chair. I fancy that the vain man would willingly immortalize himself in that picturesque costume. But as he has put on a page's clothes, he will also perform a page's part, and I have therefore at his request consented that he shall wait upon me to-day and hand me all my food. Does your grace also grant him this upon my bequest?"

"Oh, most gracious Prince, you need never make requests; you have only to command. Away there, you fellows! away from the Electoral Prince's chair, vacate your places for the page! Mr. Court Painter Nietzel, take good care not to be negligent in your duties, to-day be nothing but the Electoral Prince's page so long as we are at table, afterward you can again be the court painter!"

The page bowed in silence, and Count Schwarzenberg paid no further attention to him, but followed the Electoral pair, who were making the circuit of the hall, here and there addressing a friendly word to some member of the nobility, sweeping past before an answer could be stammered forth. The circuit was completed; a thrice repeated flourish of trumpets resounded; the Chamberlain von Lehndorf rushed to the window, and with a white handkerchief made a signal down to the pleasure garden. Cannon thundered forth salutes, informing the town that the Elector had just sat down to table, that the feast at the house of the Stadtholder in the Mark had begun.

A choice, a sumptuous banquet! Delicious viands, splendid wines! Gradually they forgot a little the requirements of rigid etiquette and pompous silence; gradually tongues were loosened, and there was talking and laughing; even the Elector lost his hard, peevish nature, his face glowed with a

brighter hue, his form became more elastic, and cheerful words sounded from his lips.

A choice, a sumptuous banquet! The Electress laughed, and had totally forgotten that Count Adam Schwarzenberg, sitting at her side, was her detested enemy. She chatted as cozily and earnestly with him as if he were one of her most devoted friends and servants. Opposite her sat her two daughters, and Princess Charlotte Louise inclined with a pleasant smile toward Count John Adolphus, who sat beside her, and had just been painting to her with glowing eloquence the glories of the imperial city, gorgeous Vienna.

Now his bold glance darted across at the Electoral pair; they were busy talking and eating; nobody was noticing him.

"Princess, dear, adored Princess, do you hear me when I speak so softly?"

"I hear you, Sir Count."

"Sir Count!" repeated he, sighing. "You retract your word, then? You thrust me again into the ranks of your court cavaliers and counts? You have no longer a word of welcome for the poor, pitiable man who worships you, who is blessed if he can only look at you, only hear the tones of your sweet voice, and who has been longing for this with desire and painful rapture for three long months? Not one word of welcome for me?"

"I welcome you—welcome you with my whole heart! Have you only been away three months? Were they not three years?"

"Seems it so to you, my adored mistress? I believe it was three hundred years—three eternities. And yet these eternities have not altered your angelic face. It is still ever radiant in its heavenly, rosy beauty, and not a feature betrays that you have suffered on my account, that you have longed for me."

"Then my face belies me, for I have longed for you; therefore the months lengthened into years, and it seems to me as if I have become a very old, sedate person since I last saw you."

"Oh, dearest, how I long for one moment of solitary com-

muning with you, when I can kneel at your feet, cover your hands with kisses, and tell you how inexpressibly I love you! Be not cruel, Louise, in this hour of reunion. Tell me that you, too, long for such a moment—that you will grant it to me."

"And if I should say so, how would it help us? You know well that I am watched day and night. My mother never lets me leave her side, and our governess watches over me still, just as if I were a child that could not walk a step without an attendant, nor write a line without her reading it."

"Ah, you dear, sweet angel! if you only loved me half as ardently as I love you, your pretty, prudent little head would already have devised some means whereby poor John Adolphus would not have to plead in vain for one blissful moment passed alone with you."

"I love you, John Adolphus, but oh, I dare not love you! The wrath of my mother would be boundless if she even suspected it."

"She need not suspect it beforehand, nor hear anything about it before we are certain of your father's gracious consent."

"You esteem that possible? You believe that my father will ever consent for me——"

"For you to condescend to become my wife? I hope so—hope that the Emperor's favor exalts me a little, so that the chasm which separates us is not too great for you to cross, for you to carry in your bosom a strong heart and a true love. About all these things I must speak with you, sweetest Princess, for here we must be cautious. Only see with what earnest looks the Electress is already regarding us! Be pitiful, Louise; tell me that you will consent to meet me alone for one quarter of an hour."

"Pass by the cathedral, then, to-morrow about ten o'clock of the forenoon. Old Trude will be there and have a message for you, and——"

"Long live our most gracious Sovereign! Long live George William!" cried Count Schwarzenberg, rising from his seat and holding the golden bumper aloft in his right hand.

All the guests started from their seats, and joined in the shouts: "Long live our most gracious Sovereign! Long live George William!" And the golden goblets clashed against one another, and the trumpets and kettledrums chimed in with crashing peals.

The Electoral Prince, too, would rise from his seat, but his head swam, all was whirls and turns before his eyes, and he sank back upon his chair.

Gabriel Nietzel stooped over him. "How are you, gracious sir? Are you not well?"

"Quite well as yet, Gabriel. Only give me a fresh glass of water and put some sugar in it."

Gabriel Nietzel flew to the sideboard, and, while he filled a glass with water, his pale lips murmured, "Your evil genius bade you say that!" And while he shook into the glass the white pulverized sugar, which, by the way, he had not taken from the bowl standing on the sideboard, in the depths of his heart he whispered, "Rebecca, this I do for you!"

He took up the tall tumbler and presented it to the Electoral Prince. Frederick William seized the glass and drank, in long draughts. It had done him good, his head was easy again, there was no longer such a fearful roaring in his ears.

George William's countenance glowed and his eyes burned. He loved the pleasures of the table, and the wine was costly and had driven all ill humor from his heart. He now felt quite comfortable, quite happy, and bent friendly glances across upon his son, who was so splendid, so glorious to look upon, and the sight of whom, although he would probably not acknowledge it to himself, rejoiced his father's heart.

Frederick William had just removed the great goblet from his lips, and placed it half full upon the table. The Elector saw it, the cold liquor looked inviting, and at the same time he would give his son a public token of his kindly disposition: all the guests must see how high in his favor stood the Electoral Prince.

"You drink water, my son?" he asked. "That is wise and prudent, and deserves to be imitated at this table of

reveling. I will follow your example, Frederick William. Hand your glass across the table to me, son."

The Electoral Prince hastily rose from his seat, and tried to hand the glass to his father; but his hand trembled so violently that he could not hold the glass; it escaped from his hands, and fell with a crash upon the table.

The Electress uttered a piercing cry, the Princesses shrieked aloud. The music stopped in the midst of a strain commenced, the guests interrupted their conversation, and all eyes were directed to the middle of the table, where the Electoral family was seated. What did it mean? Prince Frederick William rose from his seat. His countenance was pale as death, but he still tried to keep a smile upon his lips. He bowed across the table to his father. "Your pardon, sir. Permit me to absent myself, for I am not quite well."

"Go, my son!" exclaimed George William. "That comes from not being accustomed to strong Hungarian wine!" And the Elector turned, laughing, to his wife, who glanced anxiously at her son. "Your wise son," said he, "has learned everything, only he has not learned to drink. He has not been taught that in your uncle's polite and polished court, and we must supply their negligence here."

The Electoral Prince reeled through the hall, waving off all who approached him or offered him assistance. "It is nothing, nothing at all," he said with cheerful, broken voice. "I have taken a little cold. Let me get away unnoticed."

All kept their seats, as the Prince desired, and as the Elector required by tarrying himself at the table. Only the Stadtholder, in his capacity of host, had risen from the table to offer his guidance to the Electoral Prince. He approached him, proffering the support of his arm.

"Will your highness do me the honor to rest upon my arm, and permit me to escort you to your carriage?"

The Electoral Prince shuddered, and, suddenly lifting his head, flashed an angry glance from his already clouded eyes into the proud, composed countenance of the count. But it quickly vanished, Frederick William accepted Schwarzenberg's proffered arm, and, leaning upon him, tottered out of the hall into the antechamber. His countenance was deadly

pale, dark circles were under his eyes, his lips were colorless, his eyes bloodshot. But still he maintained his erect position by mere force of will, and even controlled himself so far as to smile and address a few friendly words to the count.

"My heavens, noble sir!" cried Schwarzenberg, with an expression of painful horror, "this is more than a mere passing indisposition. You are really sick—you are suffering!"

"Not so, count. I am not suffering at all, and it is only a trifling ailment. My father is quite right—the strong wine has mounted to my head. I am not used to drinking and feasting, that is all. To-morrow will—— Count, I beg you to lead me to my carriage. It is dark before my eyes!"

And the Prince sank back groaning and half unconscious. The count beckoned the princely Chamberlain von Götz to approach, and the two gentlemen, aided by a few lackeys, bore the Prince carefully out to the carriage. Then Frederick William opened his eyes, his wandering glance strayed around, and his lips stammered softly: "Where is Gabriel Nietzel? Is he with me?"

But Gabriel Nietzel was nowhere to be seen; only the Chamberlain von Götz was there, and he got into the carriage, which bore the deadly sick Prince at full gallop to the palace.

Count Schwarzenberg looked after the retreating vehicle with earnest, thoughtful face, then turned to re-enter the palace. On the threshold stood Gabriel Nietzel, and the eyes of the two men met in one glance of awe and horror.

"Your grace sees I have kept my word," murmured Gabriel Nietzel.

"Away!" commanded the count imperiously. "If you are not out of Berlin in one hour I shall have you arrested by the police, and accuse you as the murderer of the Electoral Prince, for you alone waited upon him! Be off!"

But Gabriel Nietzel stirred not from the threshold, and the look which he fixed upon the count was not humble and reverential, but threatening. "Sir," asked he shortly and harshly—"sir, where are Rebecca and my child?"

"At your lodgings, you fool! Hurry, I tell you!" And with ungentle hand the count thrust the painter from the

door, and returned to the banqueting hall to inform the Elector and his spouse with smiling, almost mocking gesture, that the young gentleman himself had said that the strong wine had slightly affected his head, and produced a temporary indisposition. The Elector laughed aloud, and the anxious brow of the Electress cleared up again. The entertainment quietly proceeded.

Why should they be uneasy about the young gentleman, who had no other sufferings than those resulting from unwonted indulgence in strong drink?

The Electoral Prince had meanwhile arrived with his chamberlain at the castle. No one came to meet them. All the servants had dispersed hither and thither, in pursuit of their own business or enjoyments. They knew, indeed, that Count Schwarzenberg's feast would be continued to a late hour of the night, and who could imagine that the Electoral Prince would return home in so unexpected a manner? The castle was deserted, and the chamberlain must needs summon to his aid the sentinel who was pacing up and down before the castle, in order to lift the Prince from his carriage and into the entrance hall. Now he called aloud for help, since the Prince had become perfectly helpless, and lay senseless upon the stone bench in the hall.

The porter, who was only asleep in his lodge, rushed out, and old Dietrich, the valet, also came hurrying down the steps.

They bore the Prince to his own apartments, put him to bed upon his own couch, and, as the Chamberlain von Götz saw the old faithful Dietrich standing beside his young master, sobbing and so full of grief, he kindly laid his hand upon his shoulder.

"It is nothing of moment, good old man. The Prince has only taken too much wine, that is all. Be comforted. To-morrow will make all straight again."

Dietrich sorrowfully shook his head. "You are mistaken, Sir Chamberlain; this is not the effect of wine. The Electoral Prince is much too fine and noble a gentleman for that; he never drinks more than he can stand. Just see how pale and wretched he looks. My dear young master is sick,

very sick. They have murdered him, they have killed him, they——"

"Hush, Dietrich, for God's sake, hush!" interposed the chamberlain, turning pale. "Guard your tongue, that it never again utter such horrible words; guard your thoughts, that they dare not even think anything so dreadful."

"It is true, nevertheless," murmured the old man, and, as he bent over the Electoral Prince and watched him with loving looks, the tears fell hot and fast from his eyes upon Frederick William's pale face. These tears roused the latter, restored him to consciousness.

There was yet one man who loved him, who sympathized with him, who wept when he saw him suffer!

The Electoral Prince opened his eyes, and, on recognizing old Dietrich, nodded to him and murmured softly, "Dietrich, I am suffering fearfully."

"Hear, Sir Chamberlain," said Dietrich; "the dear Prince recognizes me, he has his reason, he knows what he sees and says, so you see it is not wine that—— But he says that he suffers fearfully, and I believe it indeed; for what burns his vitals is—— I must go for the physician, Dr. White; he must try every means; he must know what ails the Prince—what they have done to him; and he must apply remedies. Stay here, Sir Chamberlain; I will run for Dr. White."

And old Dietrich hastily started to leave the couch, but the Prince's hand was laid upon his arm, and held him fast.

"Stay, Dietrich, stay! You, dear Götz, go you, I beg, for Dr. White and fetch him here; he must come immediately, for I am really sick. I suffer. Make haste, dear Götz. You are younger, brisker than my good old Dietrich; therefore I choose you."

The chamberlain pressed a kiss upon the Prince's burning, trembling hand. "Dearest sir, as swiftly as a man's anxious heart can move his feet I shall hasten to the doctor and bring him here!"

The chamberlain flew on tiptoe from the apartment, and all was still. Nothing was heard but the low moans and sighs of the Prince, who lay there with pallid features and shaking limbs, while over him bent weeping his faithful old servant.

After a while the Prince raised himself a little, slowly opened his eyes, and cast a sad, sweeping glance around the room.

"Dietrich, are we alone?" he asked, in a hoarse, almost inaudible voice.

"Quite alone, gracious sir."

"Then hear what I have to say to you. Incline your ear close to me, for you alone must hear me. When the physician comes, take good care not to repeat to him what you said just now to the chamberlain. He and all the world must think that it is actually nothing but wine which has made me sick. He will prescribe medicine for me. Have it prepared forthwith. You alone must stay with me. Tell them I have ordered it, and Götz must return to the banquet and tell them it was nothing but wine. Dietrich, do not give me the medicine, but throw it away. There is only one kind of physic for me—milk, only milk, that is my cordial. Give me milk, Dietrich, milk directly, for the pains are coming on again, so dreadfully, oh, so dreadfully! But do not tell anybody. Nobody must know what I suffer! It burns like fire! Milk, Dietrich, milk!"

IX.—Love's Sacrifice.

As if borne on the wings of the wind, Gabriel Nietzel had flown through the streets to his own abode. It lay in a quiet, retired quarter of the town, and, as he turned into the street and looked up to the house, he saw leaning far out of one of the windows a woman, who, her face shaded by her hand, was gazing down into the street. He recognized the form, although he could not see her countenance, and uttered a loud cry of joy. This cry of joy found an echo in the window above, and the form vanished. Gabriel Nietzel rushed into the house and up the steps. On the top step stood a woman with outstretched arms, and again Gabriel uttered a cry of joy and pressed his wife firmly to his breast, as firmly as if he would never let her leave the spot, as if his love would keep

and hold her there forever. He bore her through the open door into their chamber, bore her to the cradle standing in the center of the room, and then sank with her on his knees. They looked at one another, and then at the child, which lay there quietly with wide-open eyes, in sweet contentment.

"My child! my child!" cried Gabriel; and it was as if now for the first time he saw his boy, as if he had but just been sent him by Heaven, and for a moment, in the blissful consciousness of being a father, he forgot all—yes, *all*. He snatched up the child and hugged and kissed it, lost in rapture and delight. But all at once there came over him the memory of those pale, quivering features, the dimmed eyes, and drooping form. A shudder ran through his whole frame; with a shriek of horror he let the child fall back in its cradle, and clasped both hands before his face.

Rebecca tore back his hands, and her large black eyes gazed searchingly into his countenance. She now for the first time saw how pale he was, and how disturbed his mien. She now for the first time saw that he avoided her look, and that his breast heaved convulsively.

"Gabriel," she said, with firm, impressive voice—"Gabriel, something is the matter with you! Something has happened to you—something shocking, dreadful!"

"Nothing!" he cried, hastily leaping up—"nothing! But we must begone! We are to stay here no longer. We must away immediately—this very hour!"

"I know it," replied Rebecca quietly, her eyes fixed immovably upon her beloved—"I know it, Gabriel, and I have prepared everything, as Count Schwarzenberg himself directed. I have been in Berlin ever since this morning, but feared to come here until you had gone to the banquet. I have made all needful arrangements. I have hired a vehicle, which is waiting for us outside the Willow-bank Gate. The count says we are to go on foot; that no one in the city must see you set out, and give intelligence with regard to your movements. Since you have been gone I have packed up all our effects in boxes, and our kind, faithful friend Samuel Cohen will send them after us to Venice. What is indispensable for present use I have packed up in yonder trunk, which we

must take with us. All is ready, Gabriel, and we can go. Only one thing I know not, have you money enough for our journey?"

"Money enough!" repeated Gabriel, with a hoarse, mocking laugh. "I have more money in my pocket than I ever had in my whole life put together. I have so much money that we can buy a house in Venice, on the Ghetto; and we shall, too, and I will live there with you, and will become a Jew, and take another name, for my own name horrifies me. I will not, can not hear it again!"

"Why not?" asked she earnestly. "It is a fine name —the name of a painter, an artist. Why would you never again hear your own name, Gabriel Nietzel?"

"Because it is notorious, infamous!" groaned he—"because it is the name of a——"

"Well, why do you hesitate, Gabriel?" asked Rebecca in anguish of soul, while she laid both her hands upon his shoulders, and gazed upon him with wistful glances. He would have avoided her eyes, but could not; his looks must sink deep into those glittering, black eyes. Deep they looked, deep as the sea, and he thought to himself that a secret could be buried there, and rest secure in the bottom of her heart.

"Gabriel Nietzel," asked Rebecca, in a voice at once threatening and tender—"Gabriel Nietzel, what have you done? What lies heavy upon your soul?"

"Nothing, my Rebecca, nothing! Ask no questions! We must begone! Make haste, dearest, take the child, and come; for if we do not hurry, we are lost!"

She slowly shook her noble, graceful head and stirred not from her place. She kept Gabriel in his with her hands, which she pressed more firmly upon his shoulders.

"Gabriel, my dear, precious Gabriel, what have you done? Tell me. I demand to know it as my right. When we were married on the Lido, in the solemn stillness of the night, when we joined hands, and both swore in the presence of your and my God that we would ever love one another, and that death alone should part us, when you said, 'I take you to be my wife,' and I said, 'I take you to be my husband,' then we likewise swore that we would live truly and confidentially

with one another, and have no secrets from each other. Gabriel, fulfill now your oath. I demand it of you, by the memory of that hour, by my love for you, by our child. Gabriel, what have you done?"

"I can not tell it, and you may not hear it, Rebecca. For, once uttered, that word will be a two-edged sword, and plunge us both in misery and shame!"

"Shame! There is no shame for the Jewess! Misery! Tell me a form of misery which I have not suffered and endured from childhood up! My mother was stabbed in Venice by a nobleman because she would not break her faith with my father and desert him. My father was known as a sorcerer and vender of poisons. The noblemen used secretly to resort by night to our wretched house upon the Ghetto, and paid him great sums for his drugs, but if he showed himself upon the streets by day, the populace hooted and cast stones after him. And when they saw me, they hissed and mocked, bestowing opprobrious epithets upon me, and even went out of the way to avoid the contamination of my touch, for I was the daughter of a poisoner, a secret bravo—I was a Jewess! But when I was grown, then the young noblemen came to my father, not merely for the sake of his drugs and medicines, but also—hush! Not a breath of it! You were my deliverer —my savior! You rescued me from all distress; you were to me as the Messiah, in whom my people have hoped for a thousand years. I followed you, and I shall go with you my whole life long—go with you to the scaffold, if needs be. I know it, Gabriel, I read it in your countenance; you have committed a crime!"

"A crime! A fearful crime!" said he, shuddering. "Turn your head away, Rebecca, I am not worthy that you should look upon me!"

"I do look upon you, Gabriel, I condemn you not. I am thinking of what we said to one another in the count's picture gallery. I called to you to rescue me at any price. I told you that if I could purchase deliverance thereby, I was ready to commit a crime. That to be with you again I would abjure the faith of my fathers, although I knew I should die of penitence after the perpetration of such a crime."

"And I replied to you, Rebecca, that I, too, was ready to perpetrate a crime for the sake of rescuing you and calling you my own again, and that I would not die of penitence."

"And yet you do repent, Gabriel, you shudder at yourself. For you have done it, you have committed a crime. I will have my share in it, half of it belongs to me. In the sight of God, I am your wife, and you have sworn to share everything with me. Then divide with me, Gabriel; I claim my right. Share with me your crime, or I shall think that you love me no more, and then I shall go away, and you will never see me more."

"I do love you, Rebecca—I do love you! For your sake I have become a criminal, a murderer! I have purchased you at the price of my soul! Lay your ear close to my mouth, and I will tell you my dreadful secret: Rebecca, I am a murderer, a cursed murderer! I have committed a murder, which will cry out to Heaven against me as long as I live; for him whom I have murdered had never done me harm, but only good, and he confided in me, and trusted to my faith. Rebecca, I am cursed, and my name will be a byword in the mouths of men while books of history last. Rebecca, I have poisoned the Electoral Prince Frederick William!"

She uttered a piercing shriek, and fell back, as if struck by a thunderbolt.

"The Electoral Prince Frederick William! Not Count Schwarzenberg! The noble youth; not that detested evildoer, not him, who has deserved death a thousandfold?"

"He had not merely my life in his power, but yours and our child's. It would have profited me nothing to murder him; we should only all three have been irretrievably lost. I was forced to obey his orders—to perform the horrible deed—in order to save you and myself."

Rebecca pressed both hands tightly across her brow, and stared long at vacancy. "He must be saved!" she said. Then, after a pause, in a tone of firm determination, "Yes, he must be saved!"

"What could we do to save him?" sighed Gabriel hopelessly. "Nothing! You know your father's drugs are subtile, and never fail in their effects!"

"You administered to him some of the medicine which my father presented you with?" asked she, with a wondrous gleam of light in her black eyes.

"Yes, I gave him some. You know when we took leave of your father he handed me three boxes as a keepsake, saying that they were the only dowry he could give me with you, but that many a prince would pay us immense sums for them, if we should sell them to him for his dear relations; for in these boxes were the deadliest poisons, leaving behind not a trace of their existence. The contents of one box causes instantaneous death, and he therefore called it 'the apoplexy powder.' The contents of the second box killed more slowly, and prolonged the patient's life ten or twelve days; therefore he called it 'the inflammatory powder.' The third powder, however, because it works slowest of all, he called 'the consumptive powder.'"

"And of which powder did you give to the Electoral Prince?" asked Rebecca breathlessly.

"Of the inflammatory powder, for it was least dangerous to us."

"Did the Prince drink the whole potion poured out for him?"

"No, he only drank half, and when he tried to hand it to his father, who asked for it, the glass fell from his trembling hands, and its contents were spilled upon the table."

"Therefore the Prince only took half a powder?"

"Only half. But still he must die, for your father told me one pinch would produce death; and I gave him two, that the count might see its effects."

Rebecca did not reply. She had sunk upon her knees and folded her hands. Her lips moved as if in silent prayer.

"What think you?" asked Gabriel Nietzel, after a pause. "Why do you not speak to me? Do you despise me, because I have confessed my crime to you? Do you turn away from the poisoner, the murderer?"

"No," said she, suddenly drawing herself up erect. "No, I do not despise you, but I love you, and because I love you I will not that you should be a criminal. Had you poisoned the count, then I should have said, 'You have accomplished

a good work. God has killed him by your hand; you are nothing more than the executioner, who has inflicted merited death upon the wicked, and has rid the world of him. Lift up your head and be joyful, for you were a tool in God's hand!' But you have poisoned a noble, good man, the son of your benefactress, and his death would cry out against you, and our child would be punished for the crime of his father. 'For I am a God of vengeance,' says the Lord, 'and I will visit the sins of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation.' I love you, Gabriel, and no sin or crime could separate me from you; for have you not taken to your heart the daughter of a criminal, and sinned for her sake? But our child shall not suffer for what his parents have done. The God of our fathers shall not take vengeance on our child, the sun and happiness shall shine upon him; for we, Gabriel, we have known night and misfortune, and tasted all the bitterness of life. Gabriel, our child must be free from stain of guilt or crime, and therefore must the Electoral Prince be saved."

"Say how can it be done, show me a way to save him!"

"I know the way, and I will take it. I would save you and the child from bloodguiltiness and sin. Swear to me, Gabriel, that you will do what I shall require of you. Think of that hour upon the Lido when I gave myself to you. Think of the hour when this child was born, and I laid it in your arms and said: 'Take it. It is a gift of my love. Take the child with whom God has blessed us, and pronounced us pure!' And you swore to me with tears that you would be a faithful father to our child all his life, and shield him as far as in you lay from all the pains of earth. By the memory of that oath I now require you, Gabriel Nietzel, to lay your hand upon my child's head, and solemnly swear to me, by God, by our child, and by your love for me, to do exactly what I shall now demand of you."

With reverential, timid admiration Gabriel Nietzel looked into Rebecca's countenance, which was beaming with energy and beauty. He could not turn away his glance from her, for it seemed as if his inmost soul was held spellbound by her large, flaming eyes, resting fixedly upon him. Ever look-

ing at Rebecca, he laid his hand upon the head of the child that lay slumbering in the cradle, and said in a distinct, solemn voice: "I swear by God, by our child, and by my love for you, Rebecca, that I shall do exactly what you will require of me."

She nodded her head as proudly and gravely as if she had been a queen, who had just received the homage of her vassal.

"Listen then, Gabriel," she said. "You take the trunk, I take the child, and let us be going, for the wagon is waiting for us outside the Willow-bank Gate, as you know. Do not speak to me by the way, for I have still much to plan and ponder. Time does not stand still, and every moment increases the Prince's peril. If help does not reach him to-night, then is he lost beyond hope of recovery. Come!"

Already a question was trembling on Gabriel Nietzel's lips. He wished to ask, "Can he by any possibility be saved?" But she had said, "Do not speak to me," and, obedient to his oath, he remained dumb, took up the trunk, and followed Rebecca, who had tenderly lifted the child from its crib and had just gone out of the door. Swiftly they passed side by side through the streets, which were still deserted, for all loungers and street idlers were still tarrying in Broad Street or on the castle square. Many a time Gabriel cast a look of questioning entreaty upon Rebecca, but she saw it not; she seemed to see nothing whatever, for her eyes were gazing afar off; like a somnambulist, she strode along, and even when the baby in her arms began to cry she took no notice of it, nor sought to comfort it with tender, soothing words. At last they had passed the gate behind the willow bank, and found themselves without the city. There stood the wagon waiting for them, covered with a tilt of gray canvas. The Jewish boy who sat on the back seat under the canvas awning had fallen asleep, resting his head against the great wooden arch to which the cover was secured. The two lean little horses were greedily eating of the oats in the dirty bags around their necks. Not a creature was to be seen. The wretched conveyance had excited no attention whatever, and caused not a single passer-by to pause.

Rebecca stepped up to the wagon and gently laid the

child in the straw with which the vehicle was filled. Then, with a silent wave of the hand, she ordered Gabriel to set down the trunk he was carrying. He did so, and Rebecca took a key out of her pocket, knelt down before the trunk, and sought hither and thither among its contents. First she took from the bottom of the trunk a packet with five seals, and, as she hastily stuck it in her bosom, her eye was uplifted to heaven with a glance of glowing gratitude. Then she took out a white dress and a long white veil, carefully concealing these things under the great black mantle which enveloped her figure. Finally, she locked the trunk and handed the key to Gabriel.

"Place the trunk gently in the wagon, so as not to wake the child," she said. Gabriel silently obeyed, and then, standing on the footboard of the wagon, reached down his hand to her, as if he would ask her to follow.

She shook her head quickly. "Come, Gabriel," said she, "come, let us step across and talk under yon tree. The child sleeps and David Cohen sleeps, too. Nobody hears us. Come."

With hasty steps they crossed over to the great linden tree which stood at the side of the road. The birds sang and hopped about amid its dense foliage, and the hot sunbeams drew forth the most delicious fragrance from the blossoms with which each branch was laden. But the pair who walked up and down under the tree heeded neither the singing of the birds nor the perfume of the flowers. They were alone with one another and the sad, gloomy thoughts with which both their souls were filled.

"Gabriel," said Rebecca, recovering breath, "I will go to free you from the stain of blood, for if it remain it would not merely poison the Electoral Prince but your whole life. My father gave you only the half of my dowry, as he called it. The other half he retained and gave me. After he had presented you with the poison, and I was alone with him in his chamber, he held out to me the sacred volume, and required me to take three oaths, by the memory of my murdered mother and by the hatred and revenge which we had sworn to the whole world upon her beloved body. First, I must swear

that I would never abjure the faith of my fathers and become a Christian. Secondly, I must swear that I would rear the child that God would give me in our own religion, and never while I lived consent to its being made a Christian. Thirdly, I must swear to preserve the sealed packet he intrusted to me as my greatest treasure, my most precious possession, and only to tell you of it in case of the most extreme danger and necessity; that I was only to make use of the contents to purchase wealth or happiness. 'I have given death into your dear Gabriel's hand,' he said, 'into your hand, my daughter, I give life, and surely that is something much more rare and precious. He has the poisons; I give you the antidotes. They are worth tons of gold; they are my most precious treasure, and twenty years have I labored ere I discovered them. When I succeeded, I thanked God for this glorious discovery, and then thrice I swore upon the sacred volume, with my face turned to the East and with loud voice, that never should a Christian obtain these priceless antidotes through me, that never would I impart knowledge of them to a Christian. I will keep my oath, and divulge the holy secret only to you, my Rebecca. Guard it in your bosom under three sacred seals, and only in the most perilous hour of your life break the seal, which I herewith lay upon your lips. But never may you transfer this precious treasure to other hands; no Christian may ever touch it. Would you save life, then you must do it yourself, and only from your own hands may the one smitten with death receive life.'

"Those were the words spoken by my father, when he handed me the sealed packet. Then he instructed me how to apply the contents, and what I would have to do in order to render ineffective the three poisons given you. 'Only,' said he to me, 'the antidote must be administered before four-and-twenty hours have elapsed since the poison was swallowed, and then, still twenty-four hours later, the antidote must be used for the second time.' Gabriel, my best-beloved, now is the most perilous hour of my life, and I have loosened the seal which my father pressed upon my lips. I have the antidote for the inflammatory powder."

"Ah, Rebecca, and you will give it to me?" asked Gabriel,

seizing both her hands and looking into her lovely face with beaming eyes.

She slowly and solemnly shook her head. "You are a Christian," she said. "I have sworn to my father that no Christian should touch the precious treasure, that no hands but my own should apply the remedy he intrusted to me. Gabriel, out of love for me you gave the Prince into the jaws of death. Out of love for you I shall restore him to life."

"Rebecca!" he cried, "how will you do it—how can you accomplish it? Only from your hands the Prince is to receive life? That means, you will yourself apply the remedy? You will go to him? You would return to the city, venture into the castle? Know you not that Schwarzenberg has his spies everywhere; that every lackey in the castle is bribed by him and in his interests; that he knows what happens there night and day? Do you not know that, Rebecca? Did you not yourself often tell me so, when you visited the castellan's wife, who loved you, because she, too, was a Venetian, and could speak her native language with you. Did she not tell you in confidence that Count Schwarzenberg was her real lord and master, and that she herself every morning repeated to the count's secretary all that came under her observation in the castle? And now would you venture into that castle, that den of lions!"

"Did not Daniel venture into the lion's den, and the wild beasts touched him not?" cried she. "Why should I fear, since my work is holy and pure as Daniel's was?"

"I shall not suffer it. I shall cling to you and hold you back."

"Gabriel Nietzel, bethink you of the oath you swore upon our child's head. You will do what I require of you! This you swore. Will you break your oath?"

"No, Rebecca," he said mournfully. "Command—I shall obey."

"I shall return to the city," continued Rebecca. "Old Benjamin Cohen will hospitably entertain me and provide me with a safe hiding place. By night I shall go to the castle, and make sure that no one will detain me, no one will recog-

nize me, and that Count Schwarzenberg's spies shall not report that Rebecca Nietzel was in the castle and in the Prince's room. The dress which I shall assume will be a certain protection; trust to me and ask no questions. I know every door and inlet to the castle, for the castellan's wife often showed me through the palace, and stairs and corridors, secret doors and passages are all familiar to me. I know a little door on the Spree side, which is never locked, because nobody knows of its existence, or would regard it, for it only leads to a little niche; and that a secret door is concealed within this niche, not even the castellan's wife herself knows. I discovered it one day, when I had lost my way in the castle, and was wandering in distress through the corridors. I said nothing about my discovery, and now I shall profit by it to gain safe access and to go out again. The next day I shall spend in concealment at Benjamin Cohen's, and at night I shall go again to the palace, for the dose must be repeated. Twice in the course of forty-eight hours must it be administered, if life is to vanquish death. When I leave the castle the second night, my work will be done, for crime will be taken away from our heads, and our child will not have to suffer for the sins of its parents. Then, my Gabriel, then we shall return to my beautiful home, then shall we be free and happy! Think of that, my beloved, and let us patiently bear what must be borne."

"I will think of that, Rebecca. But tell me, what shall I do?—how shall I pass the long, dreary days of our separation? Do not be cruel. Let me return to the city with you. Benjamin Cohen will furnish a safe retreat for me and the child, as well as for yourself. I swear to you that I will keep myself concealed in the cellar, under the roof, anywhere you will, only let me go with you!"

"It can not be. The child's life must not be endangered, nor yours either, that I may maintain the courage needful for action. Consider your oath, and do what I require. Now get into the wagon without delay. David is a good driver, and perfectly devoted to us. Travel day and night until you reach Brandenburg. There dwells a brother of Benjamin, little David Cohen's uncle. At his house remain in retire-

ment until I join you, and, O Gabriel! then we shall set out together."

"Rebecca, I can not, indeed I can not leave you!"

"You must, for your crime must be expiated. Think, Gabriel, a long life of happiness lies before us. Let us courageously pass through the last cloud of evil, for beyond is day, beyond is the sun, beyond is Italy, the land of love and art! Now let us part, dearest. Farewell, till we meet again in joy!"

"Can you, Rebecca, can you so suddenly leave me and be parted from me?"

"I never leave you, for my soul is ever with you. No leave-takings, Gabriel; they make us weak, and sternly I must go to meet stern fate. Give me your hand. Farewell! Above lives a God for all men. He will protect me."

"Rebecca, only give me one parting kiss!"

"I shall kiss you when atonement has been made—nor until then shall I kiss our child again! Know this, Gabriel, that my love for you is eternal, it will abide even unto the end of the world! Now, let us part. Hark! the child cries. He calls for his father. Go to him, Gabriel, and tell our child that his mother loves you both more than her own life! Go!"

He tried once more to seize her hand and embrace her. She waved him back, and with an imperious movement pointed to the wagon.

"Remember your oath, Gabriel; you must do what I require of you," she said firmly.

"But just tell me one thing, Rebecca," implored he humbly. "When shall we meet again?"

"In four or five days, Gabriel. Stay quietly at Brandenburg, and wait for me there eight days. If by that time I have not come to you at Brandenburg, consider it as a sign that I have chosen some other route, to escape the anger and pursuit of Count Schwarzenberg, and that I have forborne to communicate with you lest I should be betrayed. Then travel with the child to Venice, making all possible speed. I shall join you on the way; but if I can not, then we shall meet again in safety at my father's house in Venice."

"Rebecca, it is impossible; I can not——"

"Hush!" interrupted she; "the child cries still, and David Cohen, too, is now awake."

She quickly stepped toward the vehicle and nodded to the little coachman, who was sleepily rubbing his eyes.

"Here we are, David," she said. "Now prove yourself a brave boy and do honor to your father's spirit. Drive boldly, but take care not to meet with accidents, and make for Brandenburg without delay."

"I promised dad, God bless him, that I would not know rest or repose, hunger or sleep, until we reached Brandenburg!" cried the boy, cracking his whip. "Get in, I will drive you to Brandenburg."

"Get in, Gabriel," said Rebecca to Nietzel, who stood at the wagon door, looking at her with wistful, melancholy air. She shook her head as a negative answer to the dumb questioning of his eyes, and only repeated, "Get in, Gabriel!"

He jumped into the wagon, but, as he did so, leaned forward and stretched out his hands to her.

"Forward, David, forward!" commanded Rebecca. David whipped up his horses, and set off at full gallop.

"Be quick, David, for I must begone!"

David Cohen gave the little horses a sharp blow across their heads, causing them to bound forward in wild impatience. Rebecca gazed after them, breathless, with staring eyes. When the vehicle had disappeared from sight she pressed both hands before her eyes, and a sob and a groan escaped her breast. Soon, however, she resumed her self-control.

"If I weep I am lost," she said, lifting up her head. "I have a difficult task to perform, and tears make one faint-hearted and cowardly. I shall not weep, at least not now. When my work of expiation is accomplished, when it has succeeded, then I shall weep. And they will be tears of joy! Jehovah! Almighty! stand by me, that I may weep such tears to-morrow night! And now to work! to work!"

She turned, and with quiet, firm steps proceeded to the city.

X.—The White Lady.

Dietrich had faithfully obeyed the Electoral Prince's orders. The physician in ordinary, Dr. White, had come, felt the sick man's pulse, and smiled upon being told that the Prince had been taken sick at Count Schwarzenberg's banquet.

"We know all about such sicknesses," he said, shrugging his shoulders. "His highness the Elector suffered from such attacks in earlier days, but he has inured himself against them now."

"But his grace seems to be really sick," remarked the chamberlain. "Only see, doctor, how pale he is! Cold sweat is standing on his brow, and he moans pitiably."

"Yes, yes, he undoubtedly has pain," said the physician gravely. "Such instances occur after a rich feast, where they eat many things together, and drink besides. I shall prescribe a composing draught for his grace, which must be administered regularly every fifteen minutes."

And the physician repaired to the Prince's cabinet adjoining his sleeping room, to write his prescription. Chamberlain von Götz gazed gloomily upon the sick man, who just at this moment uttered a loud scream, and with outstretched arms and clinched hands tossed restlessly about. Old Dietrich bent over him and wiped the perspiration from his forehead.

"He is really very sick," murmured the chamberlain. "There is nothing for it but to stay here. He must not be left alone."

"No, Herr von Götz," said Dietrich, his old face looking perfectly tranquil and composed—"no; the Prince ordered me to desire you to return immediately to the party, and not to tarry longer here. My young master condescendingly owned to me himself that it was actually the strong Hungarian wine which had occasioned his sickness, and therefore his highness wishes the Chamberlain von Götz to return forthwith to the party, that his gracious mother may not be made uneasy, and imagine that her son is seriously sick. The

Electoral Prince's orders are that you say to his mother that perhaps he may return himself to the entertainment this evening, and that she must not allow herself to be at all anxious, for he will certainly be well again to-morrow."

"That is a fine errand," exclaimed the chamberlain, "and the Electress will be much comforted by such a message. But, nevertheless, I can not possibly leave the Electoral Prince alone for the whole evening."

"He is not alone, for I am with him," replied Dietrich, shaking his head. "I, too, am a man, Chamberlain von Götz, and such my gracious young master esteems me, for he gave express orders that I alone should stay with him, and that nobody else should be admitted until early to-morrow morning. His grace would sleep soundly he said, and rest was the best medicine for him."

"But he must take the medicine that the doctor prescribes for him," said the chamberlain earnestly. "You must insist that the Electoral Prince take his medicine regularly."

"Dismiss all anxiety, Herr von Götz," replied Dietrich solemnly; "I shall see to it that the Prince regularly takes the medicine he needs."

"Here is the prescription!" called out the doctor, entering the chamber and holding out a long strip of paper. "Hurry with it to the apothecary, for I fear its preparation may occasion some little delay, since it is a nice and particular recipe, and consists of fourteen component parts. But it will surely work a cure and afford his highness relief. I shall come again this evening and see how my exalted patient is getting on."

And the medical gentleman left the room, followed by the Chamberlain von Götz.

"You think then, doctor," asked the latter outside in the passage, "that the Electoral Prince is not seriously sick?"

"Have you ever had the sickness which follows too free indulgence in wine, Sir Chamberlain?" asked the doctor gravely. "If so, you know exactly how the Electoral Prince feels."

"Badly enough," laughed Herr von Götz. "I have certainly had my own frightful experiences of that sickness.

You think then, doctor, I may without impropriety return to Count Schwarzenberg's feast?"

"Without any impropriety whatever, Sir Chamberlain. What the Prince chiefly needs is sleep and my medicine. When he has swallowed even a few spoonfuls he will feel much soothed and relieved."

The two gentlemen left the castle together, and Dietrich remained alone with the Prince. He had first hastened with the long prescription to the Electoral apothecary, and ordered that it should be left as soon as prepared in the antechamber of the Prince's rooms. Then he had fetched a pitcher of milk from his own chamber, and, kindling a fire in the Prince's sleeping apartment, warmed the milk. Now he approached with the steaming draught the couch of the Prince, who lay sighing and moaning, with closed eyes and tightly compressed lips, paying no heed to Dietrich's entreaties. Finally, after a long pause, he opened his eyes and fixed them with a vacant expression upon the weeping and trembling old man.

"Dietrich, I believe I am dying," he gasped. "But do not tell anybody. No one must know what I suffer, else *he*, too, would come to me, and I wish to see his hated face no more."

"Most gracious Prince, I beseech you, drink. Here is milk!"

"Give it to me, give it to me, Dietrich! Perhaps there is yet hope."

He emptied the cup, and again sank back. Dietrich knelt by his couch and murmured prayers, imploring God to be with the Electoral Prince and to save him from death. Hour after hour sped away. Evening drew near, the shades of night closed in, and still all was quiet and noiseless within the castle precincts. Count Schwarzenberg's feast proceeded undisturbed. It was truly a feast of enchantment, and even the Electress was carried away by it. Twice had she dispatched footmen to inquire after her son's health, and each time old Dietrich had sent word that the Prince had fallen into a sweet sleep, and that the doctor's medicine seemed to agree with him wonderfully well. Of this medicine Dietrich threw aside a spoonful every fifteen minutes, and instead of it gave the

Prince his own prescription—warm milk. But still there was no alleviation of his sufferings, and even the violent vomiting, which twice ensued, had not diminished the Prince's pain.

In Count Schwarzenberg's palace now resounded strains of the most inspiriting dance music, and from the banqueting hall the company dispersed into the two ballrooms and the adjoining apartments. In the Electoral garden preparations were being made for fireworks, which were to be displayed as soon as the night was sufficiently dark. This was the reason why, on the approach of twilight, the sight-loving multitude came streaming hither again from all directions. The Elector had seated himself at the card table, and the Electress took a walk through the conservatory and the magnificent hothouses situated in the rear of the palace, access to which was had through the great reception hall. From the Elector, who was eagerly interested in his game, Count Schwarzenberg obtained permission to accompany the Electress. The whole company, with the exception of the gentlemen busied in card playing, followed them. Like a glittering, gigantic serpent, sparkling in all the colors of the rainbow, wound the long, unbroken procession through the hothouses. They admired the exquisite taste by which these long rooms had been transformed into gardens and shrubberies; enjoyed the rare, deliciously scented flowers which peeped forth here and there amid thickets of myrtle and orange tree; amused themselves with the birds of variegated plumage, suspended from the boughs in wire cages of most delicate workmanship. Each Ah! of delight that sounded from the lips of the Electress found its repeated echo in the long line of gentlemen and ladies following her; and these loud exclamations of delight and rapture were so many acts of homage and flattery offered at the shrine of Count Schwarzenberg, the great and mighty possessor of all these glories.

There were in that brilliant assemblage only two individuals who paid little attention to the beautiful birds and flowers about them, who did not chime in with the eulogies and conversation of the company. These two were Princess Charlotte Louise and Count John Adolphus Schwarzenberg. They fol-

lowed immediately behind the Electress. The young count had offered the Princess his arm, which with a slight blush she had accepted. The Electress, who preceded them, was wholly absorbed in conversation with Count Adam Schwarzenberg, who by his witty, fascinating powers of address succeeded in enchaining her attention. The Princess Sophie Hedwig came behind her sister with two ladies of the court, chatting and laughing, looking hither and thither at birds and flowers, and, by her frequent pauses of admiration before some rare plant or chatting parrot, more than once detaining the whole company, so that there was an empty space between the first two couples and those following.

"I could fall at the feet of the Princess and kiss her hands in fervent gratitude," whispered Count Adolphus, when again the procession tarried behind them.

"Why so?" asked Charlotte Louise, smiling. "What has my sister done to merit such gratitude?"

"What? Why, she has granted me a blessed moment, in which I can tell you that I love you, boundlessly love you. Ah! why can I not speak this word aloud, that like a flash of lightning it may flame through this hall? That would be a fire which should unfold all blossoms and ripen all fruits. I love you, Charlotte Louise! I could kneel down here and repeat in strains of perpetual adoration to you, my mistress, my goddess, I love you, I am yours; but, alas! you——"

"Well," asked she with a beaming glance—"well, why do you not complete your sentence?"

"You are not mine," sighed he. "Were you so, then you would not answer the words which gush forth hot and ardent from my heart in such strange, cold fashion; then would you listen to my supplications, and grant me a moment's interview."

"Did I not tell you, Adolphus," whispered she, "that you were to meet old Trude on the castle square to-morrow morning early? She will be the bearer of a message for you."

"You said so; but I tell you, if you loved me you would not need time for reflection, but even yesterday, as soon as you heard of my arrival, your heart would have suggested the importance of our meeting in private, and devised some

scheme whereby this might be accomplished without making use of old Trude's intervention so late as to-morrow morning."

Princess Charlotte Louise laughed and blushed at the same time. "Perhaps I am not so cold and indifferent as you think, Count Adolphus Schwarzenberg," she said, with a charming expression of bashfulness and coquetry. "Perhaps I had already reflected that a conference would be desirable, were it only for the purpose of scolding you for your impulsive manners. Perhaps, too, I already know a place where we can see each other without old Trude's help."

"If you speak earnestly, then am I the happiest of men. But I can not believe you, can not believe that my proud, cold-hearted Princess actually——"

"Can not believe me!" interrupted she, smiling; "then, unbeliever, I shall convince you. Attend closely to all that I do."

She dropped his arm, and pausing before a rare Manilla flower, praised its beauty and perfume. While doing so, her little hand, accidentally of course, disappeared in the pocket of her ample skirt, and when she drew it forth again this hand was fast closed. She waited until her sister came up with the court ladies, and drew her attention to the beautiful flower and the aviary of charming birds in the rear. She then walked forward, in the blissful consciousness that a long time would supervene ere the Princess could tear herself away from the flower and birds, and that she might now speak to her lover secure from being overheard, since a wide space also separated them from the pair in front.

"What have you there in your hand, Louise?" asked the count, in breathless suspense.

"A little note to Count Adolphus von Schwarzenberg," replied she, smiling, and with swift movement she pressed the little twisted paper into his hand. His countenance lighted up with rapture, and he made a movement as if he would kneel before her, but the Princess restrained him.

"For Heaven's sake, Adolphus, consider that we are not alone," she whispered hurriedly.

"I am alone with you, and if millions encircled us still should I be alone with you in paradise. To me you are the

first, the only woman upon earth. I look upon you with the rapture which Adam felt when he first perceived at his side his God-sent, heavenly wife. You have led me back to a paradise of innocence and peace, have changed me into an Adam who the first time sees and loves a woman. Oh, my beloved, you have made me blessed indeed! This little strip of paper that you pressed into my hand, as if by an enchanter's spell, has penetrated my whole being with heavenly fire. I *must* see it, I *must* with my own eyes, with my own heart, read the words which you have indited to me."

"I will repeat to you the contents of the note," said she, smiling. "Here they are: 'On Tuesday evening at ten o'clock the little side door next the cathedral will not be locked, only closed. Through this enter a vestibule, to the right of which stands a door. Open this and mount the flight of stairs beyond. Arrived at the top, go down the little passage to the left until you reach a door at the end. It will be open.'"

"Tuesday evening?" whispered he, with enraptured looks; "and——"

Three loud cannon shots drowned his words. They announced the opening of the exhibition of fireworks, and Princess Sophie Hedwig now came rapidly forward, followed by the whole assembly, all pressing eagerly toward the great hall, whose windows commanded a view of the fireworks. The rockets flew, and artificial suns wheeled and turned in fiery circles. Even the Elector forsook his card playing, and, supported by Count Schwarzenberg, walked to the window to behold the costly spectacle. Without, the densely packed throng of men shouted aloud with delight at each new star which shot upward.

The Electoral Prince Frederick William still lay within his solitary chamber, moaning and sighing upon his couch. Regularly every quarter of an hour Dietrich had thrown away a spoonful of medicine, and given the Prince a spoonful of warm milk. But his pains had not been diminished thereby, though the Electoral Prince was evidently himself, and clearly conscious of his situation. Several times he had addressed a few affectionate words to Dietrich, seeking to comfort the faithful old man, who in his agony of mind wept and prayed,

and then tenderly pressed his beloved master's hand to his lips, and besought him to get well and live.

"If it depends on me, Dietrich," said the Electoral Prince slowly, moistening his parched lips with his tongue—"if it depends on me, I surely shall not die. Life is still dear to me, although it has brought me much of bitterness and grief. On that very account, though, I hope that the future will indemnify me. It is a sorrowful thought to me to die and sink into the grave so young, so unknown. Could I prevent it, I surely should. But this hellish fire in my veins burns on and on, and is consuming my life. Give me something to drink; milk at least lessens my pangs in some degree."

Thus passed hour after hour, and midnight drew near. Count Schwarzenberg's festival was not yet over, the Electoral family had not yet returned, and silence unbroken reigned throughout the castle. With slow, measured tread went the sentinels to and fro before the palace and through the inner corridors. At times the loud shouts of the populace penetrated in faint echoes even to the castle, and flew like spirit whispers through the broad vestibule fronting the Electoral Prince's suite of rooms. The soldier on guard there heard them with a shudder, and all the stories of ghosts and specters told about the Electoral palace awoke to his remembrance. He cast a disturbed glance around, and, holding his breath, listened with loudly beating heart to the soft sounds and murmurs vibrating through the hall. Suddenly he quite distinctly seemed to hear soft, gliding steps approaching him from the other side of the vestibule. His blood stood still with horror, he stared into the dusky hall. The little oil lamps which hung on both sides of the door leading into the Electoral Prince's apartments shed abroad only a glimmering, uncertain light, and left the background enveloped in gloom and obscurity.

All at once the soldier started: he thought he saw a white figure emerge from the darkness. Yes—his eyes saw her, his ears heard her steps!

Yes, it was no illusion! Ever nearer, ever larger loomed the white figure. It was wholly enveloped in a veil and robe of white, and only two large, sparkling black eyes looked forth from the veil. The soldier fell upon his knees, dropped his

weapon, and, folding his hands, muttered with chattering teeth: "The White Lady! God Almighty be gracious to us! The White Lady!"

He dared not look up; he only murmured in anguish of spirit the prayers by which spirits were exorcised; but he felt that the dreaded phantom came ever nearer and nearer—that he could not exorcise the Lady in White! Now she was close to him, her white garment grazed his bowed head, and the soldier shuddered and shrank within himself. It was as if he heard a door creak and turn softly on its hinges, then all was still.

The soldier ventured to lift up his head a little—the hall was empty, the Lady in White had vanished! But she had been there; he had distinctly seen her; she had entered the Electoral Prince's apartments; the soldier had plainly heard that!

Now an inexpressible horror, that was stronger than all discipline and sense of duty, seized him. He rushed out of the hall, tore open the door opening upon the broad corridor, on both sides of which lay the apartments of their Electoral Highnesses. With a loud scream he called out to the sentinel on guard there: "The White Lady! the White Lady!"

This one, too, shrieked as loudly as if the apparition itself stood before him—the Lady in White, known and dreaded of all! And both soldiers, panicstricken, ran down the corridor to tell the news to the other sentinels, and throw them all into the same state of dread and consternation.

The Electoral Prince Frederick William lay upon his bed with open eyes. For the past half hour the pains which raged within had somewhat slackened in intensity, and allowed him more repose. This season of repose had overcome old Dietrich, and, like the disciples on Mount Olivet, he had fallen "asleep for sorrow." The Prince was awake and found himself in that overwrought condition in which the high-strung, quivering nerves lend wonderful clearness and acuteness to the spirit, and in which the soul with wide-seeing vision takes in the whole past, the whole future. He saw his past rise up before him, with all its struggles, its privations, its inexpressible joys and their painful renunciation. And then,

across all these sufferings, and the pain of the present, he looked into the future, whose shining ideal stood before him in vivid clearness, beckoning and calling to him. He saw fame, he saw honor; he heard the din of battle, he saw a wild chaos, and from this chaos emerged a something, a tangible shape; it grew large, it assumed form and substance, it was a country—his country—that he himself had created, drawn forth from chaos. And now he saw a happy, contented people, saw glad multitudes throng about him and shout: "Long live our Electoral Prince, Frederick William! Long live our deliverer, our father!" That ideal, which had lain so long in the secret depths of his soul, in fact ever since he had known thought; that ideal to which he had already dedicated himself, when he had stood as a boy by the corpse of his great-uncle Gustavus Adolphus; that ideal was now truth and reality before his inward vision. He was a Prince wreathed in glory; he was beloved by his strong and happy subjects!

"I can not die," he exclaimed, in a loud, strong voice; "I need not die!"

"No, you need not die," said a sonorous voice; and a white form hovered near, and two great, black eyes glowed upon him. Frederick William tried to rise, but could not, for his limbs were paralyzed, and he felt as if chained to his couch by iron fetters.

"Who are you?" he asked softly. "What do you want here? They say that he to whom you appear is doomed to death, and yet you come to tell me that I need not die?"

"We are all doomed to die," replied the white figure; "but the hour of your death has not come yet. I am not come merely to tell you so, but to save you."

"To save me? You know, then, that I am in danger?"

"Yes! In danger of your life! Count Schwarzenberg has poisoned you. Are you not consumed by inward fires? Is not your head heavy and giddy?"

"I see plainly that you know what I suffer—you know the poison which was given me."

"I know the poison, but I also know its cure. I know its antidote, and have brought it to you. I would save you."

"You would save me?" asked the Electoral Prince. "Am

I not dying fast enough for you? Have I not yet swallowed enough of the deadly fluid that you would give me more as a remedy? The invention is somewhat flimsy! I shall not drink!"

"Unhappy Prince, you would not live, then?" asked she, in distress. "Hear me, Frederick William. If you delay, you are lost beyond all hope of cure. Nobody knows the remedy for your sufferings but myself, and nobody can save you if I do not! Oh, think not that I would merit your thanks and rewards! I have come hither at the peril of my own life, and each minute increases my own danger as well as yours. The soldiers have fled before my apparition. If a braver one should come to look closer at the White Lady, I am lost, and you with me, for then I could not administer to you the antidote."

"Tell me who you are, that I may see whether I may trust you."

"Who am I?" asked she. "I am a poor, mortal woman, who possesses nothing upon earth but a heart, which loves nothing but a poor, much-to-be-pitied man, whom not his own will but destiny has made a criminal. His child and I were threatened with death, and to save us he committed a crime. Electoral Prince, Count Schwarzenberg has poisoned you by means of Gabriel Nietzel. I come to save you. Not for your own sake. What are you to me?—why should I disturb myself about you? I love Gabriel Nietzel, and I would not have his soul burdened by a crime that would break his heart. My Gabriel has a tender heart; he was not made to be a criminal. Therefore would I absolve him from that curse, for I love Gabriel, and would not have him be a murderer. Do you believe me now? Will you try my palliative now?"

The Electoral Prince lay there silent and motionless, and his large, wide-open eyes gazed searchingly and inquiringly up at the white figure, as if they would penetrate the veil and read her features.

Rebecca had a consciousness of this, and let the white veil fall from her head. "Look in my face," she said, "and read from that whether I speak the truth."

"Gabriel Nietzel, too, came to warn me," murmured the Prince, quivering with pain, "and afterward it was he who poisoned me. From him come these fearful tortures which are burning now like the flames of hell."

"Gracious sir, oh, my dear sir!" cried Dietrich now, coming up to the bed and kneeling beside it, "I beseech you, take nothing from her. I have heard all, and I tell you it is Schwarzenberg who sends this Jewess to you. Trust her not, my beloved Prince, take none of her hellish mixtures!"

"Trust me," said Rebecca quietly. "If life is dear to you, if you hope in the future, if you would take vengeance upon the man who is your real murderer, whose mere tool my poor husband was, then accept the remedy which I bring you!"

"Yes," cried the Electoral Prince, with countenance lighting up, "yes, I will take it! Give me your remedy. Hush, Dietrich, hush! I will take it!"

"Praised be Jehovah! he will take it!" said she joyfully, drawing forth from her bosom a little flask. "Before I give you the medicine, I have something to say to you, Frederick William. As soon as you have taken it, you will fall into a deep sleep, almost resembling death. If you are disturbed in this, the efficacy of my cordial will be destroyed."

"Dietrich," said the Prince composedly, "you will take care that no one disturbs my slumbers. I command you so to do!"

"I shall obey, most gracious sir," murmured Dietrich.

"When you awake after six hours," continued Rebecca, "you will experience a feeling of ineffable comfort. Be not deluded by this, and attempt to leave your couch. Rest is necessary for you, and you are then only on the road to health. That you may be perfectly cured I must come again to-morrow night, and once more administer the cordial. Mind that to-morrow night, as at present, you be alone. No one must be with you but old Dietrich. He is a trusty, affectionate servant, and I hope to God will tell no one what he has seen and heard here, for I would be lost if he should do so."

"I swear, in the presence of Almighty God, that I will keep silence," said Dietrich solemnly.

"And now, enough of words!" cried she. "See, Dietrich, the pains begin anew, and his features twitch convulsively. We must procure him relief."

She took a glass from the table and emptied into it half of the brown liquid contained in her little flask. Then she bent over the Prince and held the glass to his lips.

"Drink this," she said, with solemnity, "and may the Lord our God bless the potion to you!"

The Prince drank in long draughts, emptying the glass to the last drop. Then he uttered one shriek, and sank back senseless on the pillow.

"If you have murdered him," cried Dietrich, shaking his fist with menacing gesture—"if you have murdered him, be sure that I shall find you out and hand you over to the hangman."

She slowly turned and once more drew the long white veil over her face. "To-morrow night I shall come again," she said. "Attend well to him, Dietrich, and see that he swallows nothing but what you give him yourself."

Then she opened the door and stepped out. The corridor was still empty and tenantless; the sentinels had not yet ventured to return to their posts. They had all collected below in the guardroom, which was situated in the rear of the castle toward the Spree, and, pale with agitation and horror, were talking in whispers of the awful event. All at once it seemed to them as if a white shadow glided past outside the windows, as if two great, sparkling eyes looked in upon them. They jumped up, rushed out of the room, and out of the castle, shrieking out to the town, "The White Lady! the White Lady!"

A couple of inquisitive men coming from Schwarzenberg's palace heard the shriek of terror and screamed it to others, and like a tempest of wind it rolled on, dragged everything into its eddying circle of awe and fright, rushed howling through the night and penetrated into the brilliantly lighted palace of Count Schwarzenberg, even into the ballroom, where the tired couples were whirling in the last dance. "The White Lady! the White Lady has appeared in the castle!"

The words ran through the halls. The dancing ceased, and the music paused in the midst of a piece begun, for the Elector himself had risen from his game of cards, and the Electress had called the Princesses from among the dancers.

"The White Lady has been seen in the castle!"

These fearful words, brought to him by his wife, frightened the Elector out of his comfortable mood, and dissipated the cheering effects of the wine. The White Lady threatened him with death! The thought filled his whole soul, and made him all at once sober and serious.

"The Lady in White has appeared in the castle," sighed the Electress, "and my son Frederick William is sick. I must go to him—I must go to my son!"

The equipage rolled off to the castle. The Elector leaned back gloomily in the corner, thinking to himself: "If I only knew whether she wore white or black gloves! Perhaps she only means to warn me, perhaps there is yet time to escape the mischief! The air of Berlin is very bad, and I vex myself too much here. As we drove up to the castle when we came from Königsberg, one of our carriage horses stumbled and fell. That was an ill omen, and we should have heeded it and turned about immediately. Perhaps there may yet be time to flee from the threatened evil, if we go back to Königsberg! If I only knew what kind of gloves the White Lady wore!"

"Just tell me what sort of a tale this is about the White Lady?" asked Count Schwarzenberg of his Chamberlain von Lehndorf, after his guests had taken their leave.

"Your excellency, one of the sentinels on duty at the castle to-day came rushing into the palace, and shrieked out wildly and madly: 'The White Lady! I have seen the White Lady! I must speak to the Elector! I have seen the White Lady!' I assure your excellency, it was actually terrific to witness the poor man's fright. He was pale as death, with tottering knees and trembling in every limb. I myself felt a cold shudder creep over me, although usually I am neither timid nor superstitious. But it is such a singular coincidence, that the White Lady should appear on the very day when the Electoral Prince was taken so suddenly ill."

"Yes, it is a singular coincidence," said Schwarzenberg, shrugging his shoulders, "and I should like to know the connecting link. Well, I hope to fathom the mystery, and then the ghost story will resolve itself into a ridiculous reality. Early to-morrow morning I shall have all the soldiers called up, who were on duty at the castle to-night, and question them myself. The castellan's wife, too, must be summoned. She is an honest woman of bold and sober wits, and from her I shall be best able to learn what is the meaning of this masquerade. Good-night, Lehndorf, sleep off your fright, you sentimental man, over whom a childish shudder still creeps, whenever he hears a nursery maid's tale! I really envy you your implicit faith, you credulous man! One thing more, though: what news have we from the Electoral Prince?"

"Most gracious sir, according to the latest accounts, the Electoral Prince was enjoying a little rest, having fallen into a profound sleep."

"Very fine!" said the count, entering his cabinet. "Good-night, Lehndorf!"

XI.—The Pursuit.

The next morning Count Schwarzenberg interrogated all the sentinels who had been on guard at the castle on the preceding night. They unanimously affirmed that they had been awake and watchful when they had seen the White Lady. The sentinel before the Electoral Prince's apartments had seen her enter those rooms, even distinctly heard the door creak as it closed behind her. Collectively the sentinels asseverated that afterward they had seen the White Lady pass before the guardhouse windows, and that she had even looked in upon them with her great black eyes. Even to-day they shuddered and trembled at the bare remembrance of the frightful apparition, and swore that they would rather die than see that horrible woman again. Then, when the soldiers

had withdrawn, came the castellan's wife, who had been summoned by Chamberlain von Lehndorf.

"And what say you to the goblin of last night?" asked Count Schwarzenberg, noticing the castellan's wife with a condescending nod.

"Most noble sir," replied the old woman solemnly, "I say that a member of the Electoral family will die."

"What? *you*, the prudent, wise, intelligent Mrs. Culwin —you, too, believe this ridiculous story?"

"Most revered sir, I believe in it because I know the White Lady, and have seen her often before."

"Oh, indeed," smiled the count; "you count the White Lady among your acquaintances; you have seen her often before? Just tell me a little about her, my dear dame! When did you first see the specter?"

"Almost twenty years ago, if it please your honor. I had just been a year in Berlin. Your honor knows I came here from Venice in the capacity of maid to your lady of blessed memory, and had committed the folly of giving up the countess's good service in order to marry Culwin, the young castellan."

"And why do you call that a folly?" asked Count Schwarzenberg, laughing. "I have always believed that you lived in happy wedlock with your good man."

"That may be so, your excellency, but for all that, a lady's maid, who can live independently always commits a folly in submitting to a husband's rule. And I could support myself, for your excellency paid me such a handsome salary, and I was in such favor with your blessed lady. Often, before I stupidly left her to get married, she would call me, and we would talk together of our beautiful home, our beloved Venice. Ah! your excellency, we have often wept together, and longed ardently to behold once more the city of the sea. Whoever comes from there never recovers from homesickness, and wherever he goes, and however far he may be removed, his heart still clings to Venice. That the gracious countess often remarked to me, weeping bitterly, which did her good, and——"

"You were to tell me when you first saw the White Lady,"

interrupted Count Schwarzenberg, for he felt uncomfortable at being reminded of his wife, knowing as he did that she had spent but few happy days at his side.

"That is true, and I beg your excellency's pardon," replied Mrs. Culwin. "Well, then, I saw the White Lady for the first time in the year 1619. I had sat up late at night, for it was a few days before the Christmas festival, and, in accordance with German customs, I wished to make a Christmas present for my husband, but had not finished the piece of embroidery I destined for that purpose. As I sat thus and sewed, I felt as it were a cold breath of air on my cheek, as if some one rapidly moved past me. I looked up startled, and there stood before me a tall, womanly figure, clad in white, looking at me from under her veil with dark, flashing eyes; and then she strode toward the door, but ere she went out she lifted her arms toward heaven, and folded her hands, which were covered with black gloves, fervently together. So she stood for awhile, and then vanished without my seeing the door open or shut. So long as the specter was there I had sat stiff and motionless, as if rooted to the spot; my heart seemed to stand still; I tried to scream, but could not. When she was gone, though, I shrieked fearfully, and my husband hastened to me, to find me in convulsions, and for hours I screamed and wept. My husband, indeed, tried to talk me out of it, and made me promise to speak of the occurrence to no one. But my silence was of no consequence, for the next day it was known to all the inmates of the palace that the White Lady had appeared, for very many had seen her. The old Elector John Sigismund had such a dread of the White Lady, and feared so much that she would appear to him, that he left the castle that very day, and went to the residence of his Chamberlain Freitag. There, however, he died in the course of two days, just two days before Christmas.* The White Lady was therefore right, with her deep mourning and black gloves.† It was not the

* Historical. *Vide* Archives of Historical Science in Prussia. Edited by Leopold von Ledebur, vol. iv, p. 97.

† They still made use of white as mourning in those days, and in half mourning wore black gloves. Therefore the White Lady appeared altogether in white when the death of the reigning sovereign or his wife was

head of the family who died, for the old Elector had abdicated, and Elector George William was even then reigning Sovereign."

"Truly, that sounds quite awful," cried Count Schwarzenberg; "and since you saw the apparition with your own eyes, I can not dispute it. You said, though, I think, that you had often seen it?"

"Twice more, gracious sir. The second time was in the year 1625. There again, one night, in the center of my room stood the White Lady, and again lifted up her arms toward heaven before departing, and again she wore black gloves. And the next day died the brother of our Elector, the Margrave Joachim Sigismund." *

"And the third time?"

"For the third time I saw the White Lady ten years ago, therefore in 1628. This time she also wore black gloves, and a black veil besides. She again strode through my room, but neither wept nor wrung her hands. She had also appeared to the Elector himself, and addressed a few Latin words to him, which in German my husband said ran thus: 'Justice comes to the living and the dead.'" †

"I remember this last story very well myself," said Count Schwarzenberg, with a peculiar smile. "His Electoral Grace was very much shocked by the apparition, and its appearance was supposed to announce years of terrible war, for no one in the Electoral family died. Now tell me, Mrs. Culwin, at what time did the White Lady appear yesterday, and how was she dressed?"

"Your excellency, I can not say exactly, for I did not see her yesterday. The soldiers, however, and watchmen, too, affirm that she was dressed entirely in white, which betokens the death of a person of high rank."

"You did not see the White Lady yesterday, then? I think she always passes through your room, Mrs. Culwin?"

"She took another route this time, and something quite

to be announced; but if only some member of their family, in white with black gloves.

* *Vide* Historical Archives.

† *Vide* Buchholz's History of Brandenburg.

unusual happened: she even appeared outside of the castle, for the soldiers maintain that she passed before their windows, and the watchman, who was just making his round, swears that he also saw a white figure glide past the wall. It seems that this time the White Lady came from the Spree side. She did not enter the great corridor at all, but repaired immediately to the Prince's apartments. The sentinel says she went in, and that he distinctly heard the door creak and shut as she passed through."

"Formerly no opening or shutting of doors was to be heard, was there?" asked the count.

"No, your excellency, I never heard anything of the kind, and it always seemed to me as if the door opened not at all, and as if the White Lady vanished like mist."

"And she only visited the Prince's apartments? Do you know who was there?"

"Nobody but the Electoral Prince and his valet, I hear. I myself was not at home when the event occurred. Your excellency's stewardess had invited me to assist her in preparing yesterday's feast, and I only returned in haste as soon as it was rumored that the White Lady was abroad in the castle."

"But you have surely seen and questioned the Prince's valet?"

"He is the only man in the castle who can not be approached with good or evil words, your excellency, and who brooks not being questioned. Of course, I tried questioning him about the White Lady, but his only answer was that he had seen nothing, and did not believe in ghost stories. He only knew that his dear young Prince was sick, and he troubled himself about nothing else."

"He is still sick then, the Electoral Prince?" asked Count Schwarzenberg with indifference. "Has he not slept off his intoxication yet?"

"Most gracious sir, I do not believe that it was intoxication, else surely the Prince would be well to-day! But he is not at all better, and the Electress, who visited her son early this morning, broke forth into loud weeping when she saw him, for he must look just like a corpse."

"Did he recognize the Electress? Did he speak to her?"

"He knows nobody, he does not open his eyes, but lies there stiff and stark like a dead man, and if he did not sometimes fetch a breath, you would believe that he were already dead. This the little Princess herself told me, as I accidentally met her in the passage, when she returned from visiting her brother. But the doctor says this sleep is the beneficial result of his treatment, and that when the Electoral Prince awakes he will be quite restored to health. He has ordered that no one else be admitted to see the Prince, and Dietrich watches over him like a Cerberus."

"And he does well in that, Mrs. Culwin. I thank you for your information, and if anything new should happen I beg of you to come to me forthwith. Tell me one thing more: Do you believe that the specter will come again to-night? Is it the custom of the White Lady to show herself oftener than once?"

"My husband maintains that if she appears, as at this time, all in white, she will come again three nights consecutively. So it was when the Elector Sigismund died. I saw her only once, and she wore black gloves, but the next evening my husband saw her on the other side of the castle dressed all in white, and on the third evening the Elector died."

"It would be interesting if the White Lady should come again to-night. I should like to know if it is the case, and—— Well, farewell, Mrs. Culwin, and if you learn anything new, share it with me. Perhaps I shall come over to the castle myself to-night."

He held out his hand to the old woman, and, as he pressed hers, he let a well-filled purse slip into it. He cut off her expressions of gratitude by a short nod of the head, and waved her toward the door. The castellan's wife withdrew, and, absorbed in deep thought, Count Schwarzenberg remained alone in his cabinet. With hands folded behind his back, he walked for a long while to and fro. His pace was ever steady, ever composed; his countenance seemed quite cheerful, quite tranquil, and yet his soul was stirred by passion and a storm was raging in his breast.

"He is alive—he is still alive," he said to himself. "One

could almost believe that he has a star above which watches over him and preserves him. It has been ever so from childhood; and at times when I think of him I experience an unwonted sensation—I am afraid of him. He is my deadly enemy, I know it. If I did not thrust him aside, he would do so with me. If I did not kill him, he would kill me. It was a mere act of self-defense to put him out of the way. If it miscarries, I am lost, for I shall not soon have courage for a second attempt. I am a coward in this young man's presence, I am afraid of him! He is my fate, my evil fate! And I can not avert it, can undertake nothing more. I lack a tool. Oh, what a blockhead I was to dismiss Nietzel! His own sins were the scourge by which I lashed him into action. He was as wax in my hands, and if he failed this time, he must have tried it again. I would have driven him to it, and he would have been forced to obey. If the Electoral Prince should now get well, Nietzel would be glad, for he is a soft-hearted fool, and had it not been for Rebecca's sake, he could never have brought himself to commit the deed. Even while he executed it his heart bled, and—— My God!" he suddenly exclaimed, "what a thought bursts upon me! If this Nietzel——"

He was silent and sank into an armchair, putting his hands before his face, to shut out the outer world, to be undisturbed in his deep train of thought.

Long he sat there, silent and motionless. Then he let his hands glide from before his face, which had now again resumed its haughty, composed expression, and arose from his seat.

"I must know what is the meaning of this ghost story," he said softly to himself. "Nowhere has the phantom been seen but in the antechamber to the Prince's rooms. It did not go like other spirits through walls and closed doors, but must needs open and shut doors, like ordinary mortals. Yet old Dietrich denies having seen the White Lady in the Electoral Prince's room. Then afterward the White Lady was seen outside the castle, she did not vanish through the air, but went out like a human being. It is a plot, that is clear. They are conspiring with the Electoral Prince, and profit by the

mask to obtain safe access to the castle; or it may be Nietzel, come to confess what he has done to the Prince—maybe even to bring him a remedy. I must unravel it! I am sure the illusion succeeded so well last night that the apparition will be repeated. I shall make my regulations accordingly, and if it is so, then let the White Lady beware of me, for I am a good conjurer. I shall go to the castle myself to-night, and when the sentinels flee, I shall go in. Ah! we shall see who is stronger, the White Lady or the Stadtholder in the Mark!"

Melancholy and quiet reigned all day long in the Electoral palace. The Elector himself remained in his cabinet and had the court preacher John Bergius called, that he might pray with him and edify him by a few hours' pious conversation. But the dreadful uncertainty as to whether the White Lady had appeared in deep mourning or with black gloves still continued to disturb him, and whenever a door opened a shudder crept through his veins, for he thought that the White Lady herself might be coming to call him away.

"I shall leave Berlin," he said perpetually to himself. "I shall return to Königsberg; for if I stay here I will certainly die of anxiety and distress. I can not live in the house with a ghost. I shall go away. Ah! there is the door opening again! Who is it? Who dares come in here?"

"It is I, my husband," cried the Electress, bursting into tears. "I am just from our son."

"How is he?" asked the Elector carelessly. "Has he at last slept off the fumes of liquor?"

"Alas! George, I fear this is no case of intoxication, but he is dangerously sick. The White Lady did not appear for nothing."

"What, you think she came on our son's account?" asked the Elector, almost joyfully. "You think it is not for our——" He paused and drew a breath of relief, for he felt as if a heavy burden had been lifted from his soul. "You really think, my dear, that the White Lady came on our son's account?"

"I fear so, alas! I fear so! My son is sick and will probably die, and our house will be left desolate, become extinct, and ingloriously decay. Oh, my son! my son! I had built

all my hopes upon him, and when I thought of him the future looked bright and promising."

"And if he were no more, then would all look sad and gloomy to you, although your husband would still be at your side, which rightfully ought to console you. But you have ever been a cold wife to me and a tender mother to your son, and it really vexes me to see how you love the son and despise his father. What an ado you make merely because your son has taken a little too much liquor, and suffers from the effects of intoxication, as the doctor says!"

"But I tell you, George, the Electoral Prince is sick, and the White Lady——"

"I will hear no more of that," broke in the Elector passionately; "it is a silly, idle tale, not worthy of credit. Everybody is dinning it into my ears to-day, and it is simply intolerable to have to listen. I just wish that I could leave this place, to be rid of this tiresome ghost story, and not to have to undergo such torment and vexation. In Königsberg, at least, we live in peace and quiet, and are not forever plagued by the sight of sullen faces and perpetual threats of war and pestilence. In Königsberg Castle, too, the White Lady has never appeared, and there are no nightly apparitions there."

"Let us return to Königsberg, George!" cried the Electress. "Do so for our son's sake; I tell you if we stay here, he is lost! Death stands forever at his side, threatening his precious young life! Ask me not what I mean, for I can not explain myself; yet I feel that I am right, and that he is lost if we do not speedily depart. Only listen this one time to my entreaties and representations, my husband. Let us set out before it is too late."

"Well then, Elizabeth, I will do as you wish," said George William, who was glad that he could grant his wife what he so ardently wished himself. "Yes, we shall promptly depart, since you urge it so pressingly."

The Electress gently encircled her husband's neck with her arm and imprinted a kiss upon his brow. "Thank you, George," she whispered. "You have probably saved our son from death. May the merciful God grant him restoration to health, and so soon as this is the case let us set off."

"Make all your preparations then, Elizabeth, for I tell you your tenderly beloved son is only a little tipsy, and to-morrow will be well as ever."

"God grant that you speak the truth, George. Then let us commence our journey day after to-morrow, which is Wednesday. But hark! I have one more request to make of you. Tell no one of our projected trip. Let us make our preparations in perfect secrecy."

"For all that I care," growled the Elector. "The principal thing is to be off. Abode here has been hateful to me ever since I heard those shouts of the populace the day our son returned. I can not live in a city where the mob undertakes to meddle in government affairs, and even prescribes to its Sovereign the dismissal of his minister. It is an uproarious, insolent rabble, the rabble of Berlin, and I shall not feel glad or tranquil until I have left the place."

"And I, too, George, will not feel glad or tranquil until we have left the place, carrying our son with us. I am going to work directly, and will prepare everything for our departure, and consult with my daughters. But I must first go and see how our son is."

The Electress hastened back to the apartments of the Electoral Prince, and old Dietrich came to meet her with joy-beaming countenance to announce to her that the Prince was awake, and felt perfectly well. "He only feels a great weakness in his limbs, and his head is heavy. The doctor has been here, and ordered that the Prince be kept perfectly quiet to-day, and not allowed to speak with any one or to leave his bed. To-morrow he will be quite well again."

"Then I will not speak to him," exclaimed the Electress; "I will only take one look at him and give him one kiss."

She entered her son's sleeping room and stepped up to his couch. The Electoral Prince smiled upon her, and his large eyes greeted her with tender glances. He had already opened his mouth to speak, but the Electress quickly laid her hand upon his lips.

"Do not speak, my Frederick," she whispered softly. "Sleep and compose yourself; know that your mother tenderly loves you. For my sake, my son, keep quiet to-day;

keep your bed and talk with no one. Will you not promise me?"

He nodded smilingly and imprinted a kiss upon the hand which his mother still held over his lips. The Electress hurried away, and Frederick again remained alone with his old valet.

"Now, Dietrich," he whispered softly, "now keep watch that no one enters, and let us quietly await the night."

"Your grace thinks that the White Lady brought you good medicine last night, and that she will come again, do you not?"

"I am convinced of it, my good old man. God has sent her for my cure. God will not have me die already."

"The name of the Lord be blessed and praised!" murmured Dietrich, sinking upon his knees in fervent prayer.

Deep stillness pervaded the Electoral Prince's apartments the whole day long, for nobody dared venture in. The doctor himself, who came toward evening, only peeped in through a crevice of the door, and nodded quite contentedly when Dietrich whisperingly told him that the Prince had again fallen into a gentle slumber.

"I knew it," said the doctor with gravity. "My medicine was meant to cure him by means of sleep, and I am not surprised that my calculations have proved perfectly correct. To-morrow the Prince will be perfectly well—that is to say, if he regularly takes my medicine. It has been prepared for the second time, I hope?"

"Yes, indeed, doctor, and the Prince has half emptied the second bottle."

The doctor nodded with an important air, and repaired to the Electress, to inform her that the Electoral Prince had been upon the point of taking a violent nervous fever, but that the right medicament, which he had given him, had averted this evil, and saved the Prince from imminent peril.

Old Dietrich, however, threw away a spoonful of medicine every quarter of an hour, and when night came the bottle was empty.

And now the longed-for night had closed in with its curtain of darkness, its noiselessness and quiet. Deep silence

ruled throughout the castle, no loud word was any longer to be heard, not a man was to be met in hall or passage. Before the ushering in of the momentous hour each one had made haste to tuck himself up in bed, and shut his eyes, for everybody dreaded lest the specter of the preceding night should walk abroad again and show itself to him. The sentinels in the corridor before the Electoral suite of rooms and in the vestibule of the Prince's apartments dared not walk to and fro, for the noise of their own steps terrified them, and the dark shadows of their own forms, thrown upon the ground by the dim oil lamps, filled them with unspeakable dread. They had planted themselves stiffly and rigidly beside the doors, firmly determined as soon as the awful apparition should show itself to take to their heels and return to the guardroom. And happily they had some justification for this, inasmuch as the soldiers had received orders from the Stadtholder in the Mark, when they relieved guard, to convey instant tidings to the guardhouse if anything remarkable should occur.

In order to convey instant tidings, they must of course take to their heels and forsake their posts. This was the only comfort of the soldier who was stationed in the vestibule leading to the princely apartments, and therefore he stood close to the door, which was only upon the latch, that he might the more rapidly gain the grand corridor, and warn in his flight the sentinels there. Yet he dared not open his eyes, and his heart beat so violently that it took away his breath.

The great cathedral clock tolled the hour of midnight with loud and heavy strokes. The clock in the castle tower gave answer, and then the wall clock in the great corridor slowly and solemnly struck twelve.

The soldier closed his eyes, and murmured with trembling lips, "All good spirits praise the Lord our God."

The clangor of the clocks had ceased, and all again was still.

The soldier ventured to open his eyes again. As yet no sound broke in upon the stillness; his glance timidly and slowly made the circuit of the hall. The two oil lamps burned clearly enough to enable him to survey the whole intervening

space. He saw everything quite distinctly. There the door with the lamps, here the door beside which he leaned; against the wall on that side those two huge, black wooden presses, so curiously carved, and between them that little door. This door began to make him uneasy. Whither did it lead? Why stood no guard there? Was it locked or merely latched? He asked himself all this with quickly beating heart, and could not turn his glance from it. He had never before observed it. Now it seemed to him as if it moved! A cold shudder ran through his whole frame.

Yes, it was no illusion! Yes, the door opened, and there stood the White Lady in her long, flowing robes! The soldier did not shriek, for horror had frozen the scream upon his lips. He tore open the door, and rushed into the corridor, and his deadly pale and terrorstricken face imparted with greater rapidity than words to the two sentinels there the dreadful tidings. All three ran down the corridor together to the front door, down the steps, across the wide court, and into the guardroom.

"The White Lady! the White Lady!" they gasped.

"Where is she? Who has seen her?" inquired a form emerging from the rear of the room and approaching them; and now, as the lamplight fell upon this form, the soldiers recognized it very well—it was the Stadtholder in the Mark himself who stood before them, and behind him they saw his Chamberlain von Lehndorf and the police-master Brandt.

"Which of you has seen the White Lady?" asked Count Schwarzenberg once more.

"I, gracious sir," stammered one of the three with difficulty. "I was stationed before the Electoral Prince's rooms, and I saw the White Lady enter through the little door between the two presses."

"And whither went she?"

"That I did not see, your excellency, for——"

"For you ran away directly," concluded Count Schwarzenberg for him. "And you two others! You stood in the great corridor; did you see the apparition, too?"

"No, your excellency, we did not see her. She did not come through the great corridor."

"You did not see her. Why did you run away then?"

"Your excellency, we ran away because—because—we do not know ourselves."

"Well, I know," cried the count, shrugging his shoulders. "You ran away because you are cowards! Hush! No excuses now! We shall talk about it early to-morrow morning. Stay here in the guardroom. I myself will go up and see what folly has frightened you hares. Lehndorf and Brandt, both of you stay here and await my return."

"But, most gracious sir," implored the chamberlain, "I beg your permission to accompany you. Nobody can know——"

"Whether the White Lady may not stab and throttle me, would you say? No, Lehndorf, I fear no woman's shape, be she clothed in white or black. I am well armed, and methinks the White Lady will find her match in me. All of you stay here; but if I should not return in an hour, then you may mount the stairs and see whether the White Lady has borne me off through the air.—Which of you," he said, turning to the soldiers—"which of you stood guard before the princely apartments?"

"It was I, your excellency."

"Whence came the White Lady?"

"She came through the little door between the two presses in the vestibule."

"It is well! You will all stay here. And, as I said, Lehndorf, if I return not in an hour, then come."

He nodded kindly to the chamberlain and strode out of the room.

Meanwhile above, in the Electoral Prince's chamber, the White Lady had been expected with glowing impatience. Dietrich had already stood for a quarter of an hour at the antechamber door, waiting with palpitating heart for her appearance. The Electoral Prince had with difficulty raised himself up, and, supporting himself upon his elbows, had been listening with uplifted head in the direction of the door ever since the midnight hour had struck. And now the door opened and the White Lady glided in. With gentle, undulating gait and veil thrown back she went to the Prince's bed, and

when she saw him sitting up a smile lighted up her pale face.

"You see, Electoral Prince Frederick William, I have not deceived you," she said; "you live, and you will now get perfectly well."

"Yes, I believe that I will get well," replied the Prince; "and I owe my life to you."

"Never mind that," said she, slowly shaking her head. "I am not here for your sake, but for my poor Gabriel's sake, to expiate his sin and to free his soul from guilt. I dare not use many words. The fame of the White Lady has spread through the whole city, and it may well be that they are on my track to-night—that Count Schwarzenberg's suspicions have been aroused. He is a bad man, and I am afraid of him."

"And yet you have come here! Have not shunned danger in order to save me!"

"I have not shunned danger in order to go to my beloved and be able to tell him—'Lift up your head and rejoice in the Lord; crime is taken away from your head—you are no murderer, for the Electoral Prince lives.' One thing I would like to add, and I beseech you to grant it to me. Say that you will pardon Gabriel Nietzel."

"I pardon Gabriel Nietzel with my whole heart, and never shall he be punished for what he has done to me! You have atoned for his crime, and may God forgive him, as I do."

"I thank you, sir. And now take your second draught."

She took the little flask, poured the rest of its contents into a glass, and handed it to the Prince.

"Drink and be glad of heart," she said, "for to-morrow, early in the morning, you will awake a sound man. The angel of death has swept past you; take good heed lest you fall a second time into his clutches. Flee before him to the greatest possible distance. There, take, drink life and health from this glass, and the Lord our God be with you in all your ways!"

"I thank you, and blessed be you too!" And the Electoral Prince took the glass from her hand and drained it.

"It is finished," said Rebecca, heaving a deep sigh.

"Now I can return to my beloved and my child. Farewell!"

"Give me your hand, and let our farewell be that of friends," said Frederick William.

She reached forth her little white hand from beneath her veil, and he cordially pressed it within his own. "You are a noble, high-minded woman, and I shall ever remember you with gratitude and friendship. I owe you my life; it is truly a great debt, and you would be magnanimous if you could point out some way whereby the weight might be a little lessened. I beseech you tell me some way in which I may prove my gratitude."

"I will do so, sir! Some day when you are Elector, and a reigning Sovereign in your land, then have compassion upon those who are enslaved and oppresed, then spare the Jews!"

She turned away, drew her veil over her head, and disappeared.

"My work is finished! My beloved is atoned for!" exulted her soul. As if borne on wings of happiness and bliss, she soared through the antechamber and stepped out into the vestibule.

All here was still and quiet, and she did not observe that the sentinel no longer stood at the door. Her thoughts were withdrawn from the present, her soul was far away with *him* —him whom she loved, for whom she had risked her life.

Thus she sped through the great space and approached the door between the two presses. All at once she started and shrank back, and the tall, manly form standing before this door sprang forward, and with strong hand tore her veil impatiently from her head.

"Rebecca!"

"Count Schwarzenberg!"

For one moment they surveyed one another with flaming eyes.

She read her death sentence in his looks. But she would not die. No, she would not die! She would see her beloved, her child once more! With a sudden jerk she freed her arm from the hand that held her prisoner. She knew not what

to do, whither she could flee. She had only a vague consciousness that to be alone with him meant death—that she would be safe only outside the castle. Without, on the street, Schwarzenberg would not venture to seize her, for he knew that she possessed his secret and that she would accuse him. She flew across the vestibule, tore open the door to the long corridor, and sprang down it like a hunted deer. But the pursuer was behind her, close behind her! She heard his breath, he stretched out his hands toward her—she felt his touch, and again she burst loose and flew away!

At the end of the corridor is a small staircase which leads to the upper stories. She knows the way—oh, she knows the way! Above it is another long corridor, and if from the head of the stairs she turns to the right, she will reach the great staircase. She will hurry down to the quarters of the castellan and his wife; she will call—scream!

Oh, if she can only get so far!

She flies up the little steps, but she feels the pursuer close at her heels. And just as she reaches the top step, his hand, like a lion's paw, is laid upon her shoulder.

"Stand still, or I will strangle you!" he murmurs. "Stand still, and I swear that I will not kill you!"

"No, no, I do not believe you!" she gasps, and with both hands she seizes his and thrusts it back. Only on, on! She no longer knows whether she turns to the right or left, she runs down the dimly lighted corridor, and he follows.

"O God! O God! there is no staircase!" She has missed the way—there is no way out now! The dread enemy is behind her! She can no longer avoid him! He will kill her, for she knows his secret! No escape!—no deliverance!

But at the end of the corridor she sees a door. If she can only succeed in opening it, jumping into the room, shutting the door, and drawing the bolt!

"God help me! God be with me!" she calls out aloud and flies to the door, bursts it open, rushes through, and—his weight presses against it; she can not shut it, she can not draw the bolt. He is there with her in that little room, which has no other outlet. No deliverer is near! She falls upon her knees, and lifts up her arms to him imploringly. "Oh,

sir! oh, sir, pity! Do not kill me! I will be silent as the grave!"

"As the grave!" repeats he, with a savage smile.

He stoops down and something bright glitters in his hand! She sees it quite clearly, for it is a bright summer night, and her eyes are inured to darkness.

"Almighty God, you would murder me! Mercy, sir, mercy!"

He has closed the door behind them, yet the shriek of her death agony has penetrated the door and echoed down the corridor. Nobody hears it. All the chambers in this upper story are bare and uninhabited, and for economy's sake the corridors and staircases in this upper part of the castle are unlighted. To-day, however, at nightfall, the Stadtholder had himself brought word to castellan Culwin that every passage, landing, and staircase in the whole castle should be lighted! And so it was, and even in that remote upper story lamps are burning. How long and solitary this corridor is! Not the slightest sound has broken the stillness since those two sprang into that room.

But now! A fearful, piercing shriek! A death cry forces its way through the door and in one long echo vibrates along the corridor. It sounds like the wailing and moaning of invisible spirits. Then nothing more interrupts the silence. Nothing more!

The door opens again, and Count Schwarzenberg steps into the corridor.

He is alone.

He locks the door and puts the key into his pocket. Then, with quiet, firm tread, he goes down the corridor, down the little staircase, and finally, with composed, haughty bearing, down the great staircase into the guardroom.

"God be praised, your excellency, that you are here!" calls out Lehndorf, hastening to meet him.

Count Schwarzenberg nods to him, and then turns to the soldiers, who stand there silent and motionless.

"What fools you are!" he says, shrugging his shoulders. "To put you soldiers to flight no cannon is required, but only a couple of white cats. A white cat it was, which made cow-

ards of you. I saw her bounding along before me through the great corridor, and followed her to the upper story. There she slipped into an open door, the last door in the upper story. I jumped after her into the little apartment, but she must have found some other way out, for I could find her nowhere again, and that is the only wonder of the whole story, for the windows were closed. For the rest I command you to let naught of this story transpire, for fear of giving rise to idle tales."

The soldiers heard him in reverential silence, but the next morning it was known throughout the castle and almost through the whole city that the White Lady had made her appearance again, and that at last, when pursued, she had vanished in the form of a white cat in one of the rooms in the upper story of the castle. After that nobody ventured into the upper story, and, as it was uninhabited, it was not necessary to station sentinels there.

XII.—The Departure.

When the Electoral Prince awoke the next morning after a long, refreshing slumber, his first glance fell upon his faithful old valet, who stood at the foot of his couch, his face actually beaming with joy.

"Why, Dietrich," said Frederick William, "you look so happy! What has altered your old face so since yesterday?"

"The sight of you, most gracious sir, for your face has altered, too. Your cheeks are no longer deadly pale, nor your features distorted. Your highness looks quite like a well man now; somewhat pale, it is true; but your lips are again red and your eyes bright. Ah, gracious sir, the dear White Lady kept her word, she saved you!"

"God bless her!" said the Electoral Prince solemnly. "But hark! old man, tell nobody that I have been saved. You must not use such dangerous words, not even think them. There was no need to save me, for I have been exposed to no

peril. I have not been sick at all, but only overcome by wine, and, to speak plainly, drunk—do you hear, old man? I have been drunk two whole days: such is the account you must give of my attack."

"I shall do so, your highness, since you order it; but it is a sin and a shame that I should slander my own dear young master, who is such a sober, steady Prince."

"Now, Dietrich," said the Electoral Prince, with a melancholy smile, "you give me more praise than I deserve. I was not quite so sober in Holland."

"No, sir; in dear, blessed Holland, life was a different thing. It was like heaven there, and when I looked at your grace I always felt as if I saw before me Saint George himself, so bold, spirited, and happy you ever seemed."

"And so I felt, too," said the Prince softly to himself. "But all that is past now. *All!* The costly intoxication of happiness is at an end, and I am sobered. Yes, yes," he continued aloud, springing with energy from his couch, "you are quite right, old Dietrich. Now help this sober, steady Prince to dress himself, that he may wait upon the Elector and Electress and announce his recovery to them."

After the Electoral Prince had made his toilet, he repaired to the Electoral apartments to pay his respects. George William received his son with sullen peevishness of manner, hardly deigning to bestow upon him more than a single glance of indifference.

"Why, you still look pale and weak," he said coolly. "It is no great honor for a Prince to be overcome by a couple of glasses of wine, and to succumb as if he had been struck by a cannon ball."

"Most gracious sir," replied Frederick William, smiling, "I hope yet to be able to prove to your highness that I can stand against the fire of cannon balls better than Count Schwarzenberg's wine, and that I can go to meet a battery of artillery more bravely than a battery of bottles."

"I hope it will not be in your power to prove any such thing, sir," cried the Elector impatiently. "I want to hear nothing about war, and you must banish all thoughts of war and heroic deeds from your mind, and become a peaceful, law-

abiding citizen. Your head has been turned in Holland, but I rather expect to set it right again! We are going back to Prussia, and you will accompany us. Go now to the Electress, and disturb me no longer in my work."

Frederick William bowed in silence and repaired to his mother's apartments. The Electress received him with open arms, and pressed him to her heart.

"I have you again, my son, I have you again," she cried with warmth. "A merciful God has not been willing to deprive me of my only happiness; he has preserved you to me. Oh, my son, I love you so much, and I feel, moreover, that you love me, and that we shall understand each other, and that all causes of disagreement will disappear so soon as that hateful, dreaded man no longer stands between us—he, who is your enemy as well as mine. We are going back to Prussia, and my heart is full of joy, hope, and happiness. There I shall have you safe; there you are mine, and no murderer or enemy there threatens my beloved only son!"

"But, most revered mother, there the worst, most dangerous enemy of all threatens me."

"Who is he? What is his name?"

"Idleness, your highness. I shall be condemned there to an inactive, useless existence. I shall have nothing to do but to live. O most gracious mother! intercede for me with my father and Count Schwarzenberg, that I may be appointed Stadtholder of Cleves, for there I would have something to do, there I could be useful, and they wish for my presence there."

"You do not wish to stay with me, then?" asked his mother, in a tone of mortification. "You already wish yourself away from me and your sisters?"

The Prince's countenance, which had been just aglow with enthusiasm, having for the moment dropped its mask, now once more assumed its serious, tranquil expression, and again the mask was drawn over its features.

"I by no means long to be away from you," he said quietly, "but I shall delight in accompanying you to Prussia."

"That is what I call spoken like a good, obedient child," cried the Electress, "and, Louise, I advise you to profit by

such an example. Just look at your sister, Frederick, only see what a sorrowful figure she presents. She does not even come to welcome her brother, but sits there quite disconsolate with tears in her eyes."

"No, dearest mother, I am not crying," replied the Princess gently. "I, too, am right glad that we are to return to Prussia."

"That is not true, mamma," exclaimed Princess Hedwig Sophie; "she is not glad at all. On the contrary, she cried and lamented all last night, thinking that I was asleep and knew nothing about it. But I heard everything. I know that she would rather stay here, and that she finds it charming here all of a sudden, although she used to think it so dull. But Louise has entirely changed these last four days, and since *he* has been here she finds tiresome old Berlin a splendid place, and——"

"But, Hedwig," interrupted her sister, whose cheeks were suffused with a crimson flush, "what are you talking about, and how can you chatter such nonsense?"

"It is true, she talks nonsense," said the Electress severely; "yet I should like to know what her words signify. Who is *he* who has so transformed tiresome Berlin in your sister's eyes?"

"Why, you do not know, mamma?" asked the mischievous child, smiling and putting on a look of astonishment. "You do not know who loves our Louise so ardently, so passionately? You do not know the man for whose sake she would leave father and mother? You do not know the only man whom the Princess Charlotte Louise loves?"

"I do not know, but I command you to tell me!" said the Electress dryly.

"Well," said the Princess, smilingly surveying the group, "it is our dear, only brother—it is Frederick William."

"You are a little blockhead!" exclaimed the Electress, shrugging her shoulders and smiling.

"You are a dear little rogue," said Frederick William, tenderly embracing his willful sister. She playfully broke away from him, dancing through the hall, and challenging her brother to pursue and overtake her. Princess Louise said

not a word, but the blush upon her cheeks died away, and the expression of horror and alarm vanished from her features.

Still Princess Hedwig Sophie kept up her frolic, and as often as the Prince thought he had caught her she flew off again like a butterfly. Finally, at the extreme end of the hall, he held her fast, and now, laughingly and tenderly, she flung her arms about his neck, and whispered softly: "Expect me this evening in your room at nine o'clock. I have something important to tell you. Silence!"

Again she let him go, and continued to hop about, laughing merrily and cheerfully as a child.

And in the evening, when the clock in the great corridor had just struck the ninth hour, the Princess Hedwig Sophie slipped unperceived into the room of her brother, who already held the door open for her and awaited her coming.

"Look, here you are, my princess of the fairies," said he, smiling. "What is there now on hand, and what playful scheme are you revolving in your mind to-day?"

But the countenance of the Princess exhibited no signs of playfulness. It was pale, and her whole being seemed under the influence of violent excitement.

"Frederick," she said hurriedly, "I have a dreadful secret to confide to you. Our sister Louise loves Count Adolphus Schwarzenberg."

"I thought as much," murmured the Prince.

"I have known it for a long while," continued the Princess, "but I took no notice of it, hoping that absence and separation would make her forget him. But since his return I have had no more hope. Last night, in her distress, she betrayed all to me, and I must tell you something dreadful, something shocking. You must reveal it to nobody—not another one must know it. Do you promise me that?"

"I promise, Hedwig. But tell me what it is."

She bent over close to his ear and whispered:

"She has granted him a rendezvous."

"Impossible, sister, you are mistaken!"

"No, no, Frederick, I am not mistaken. I heard her my-

self when she told him so. It was in Count Schwarzenberg's hothouse; I came behind her with the ladies, and she thought I was paying no attention whatever to her and all that she was saying to Count Adolphus. But I managed to watch her constantly without attracting the attention of the ladies I was with. My eyes and ears are very sharp, and I saw her press a note into his hand, and heard her repeat to him the contents of the note, appointing an interview with him this evening at ten o'clock. Old Trude is to wait for him at the back side door of the castle next to the cathedral, and she is to conduct him to her. You must not suffer it, Frederick William; that bad Count Schwarzenberg shall not carry off my sister."

"No, that he shall not," said the Prince. "I thank you, sister, for coming to me. We two shall save her—we two alone, and nobody shall know anything about it. Even she herself must not find out that we know her secret. We must be brisk and determined, though, for it is late, only wanting a half hour of being ten o'clock. Who is old Trude?"

"Louise's chambermaid, who has been with her all her life, for Trude was her nurse. She idolizes our sister, and would go through fire and water for her sake. What Louise commands is law with her."

"Then we must prevent old Trude, by force or cunning, from going to the door and admitting the count."

"By force, impossible, for that would make a noise; but by cunning. I have it, Frederick, I have it! I will entice old Trude into my room and then lock myself in with her, playing all sorts of tricks, and seeming to have no object at all in view but amusement and teasing. I will take care of old Trude."

"And I of Count Schwarzenberg. It is high time, sister! Make haste, lest old Trude escape you. But hark! It will be necessary for you to speak to the old woman, besides. You must threaten her with revealing the whole affair to our father if she does not do as you command, and tell our sister that she waited for the count a whole hour in vain."

"You are right, Frederick. That is still better. Louise must believe that he did not come. To work!—to work!"

The Princess sprang away with the fleetness of a gazelle, and the Prince was left alone.

"I wish I could go to meet him sword in hand," he muttered between his clinched teeth. "I understand their game. They would have poisoned me and carried off my sister, so that she would have been forced to marry him, and then by means of the Emperor she would have been declared heiress of the Electoral Mark of Brandenburg. Ah! I penetrate their designs, and they shall not succeed. Their poison proved inefficacious, and so shall their love! Now away to the door through which the fine gallant was to have entered. He will find it locked, and I shall keep guard before it the livelong night."

The Prince left his own apartments, and hurried down a private staircase and through dark passages to the door designated. It was only on latch, but a key was in the lock. Quickly he locked the door, and then stood listening intently. It struck ten o'clock, and as the last stroke vibrated in his ear a hand was laid upon the door latch outside, and a manly voice whispered: "Trude, open! It is I. The one whom you expect! Open, quick!"

"Were it hell," murmured the Prince softly to himself, "yes, were it hell, I would open the door. But there is no admittance to paradise for you. Knock on, knock on! The gates of the Electoral mansion are not undone for you. Knock on; the castle of the Elector of Brandenburg is locked against you, and you must stand without, you Counts of Schwarzenberg, for you shall not thrust me out of the palace of my fathers! I shall be Elector of Brandenburg in spite of you, and then, Count Schwarzenberg, Stadtholder in the Mark, then be on your guard! I shall remember, Count Adolphus Schwarzenberg, that your finger rapped at this door, threatening to bring shame and disgrace upon this house! And then, perhaps, I may open a door for you, and allow you to enter, but it will not be for a lover's rendezvous, and the door which admits you will not so easily grant you an escape. Now I suffer and endure, but a time of reckoning will come! Schwarzenbergs, beware of me!"

For a long while yet the Electoral Prince stood within

the door, and for a long while yet, at intervals, the knocking on the outside was repeated. Then all was still. Frederick William returned to his own apartments.

Early next morning took place the departure of the Electoral family for Prussia. It was to be wholly without formality, and consequently no one had been notified. The Elector had only caused the two Counts Schwarzenberg to be summoned after the carriages were ready, and when they came in haste they found the Electoral family just on the point of entering their several equipages.

"I meant to set out secretly," said George William, stretching out both hands to the Stadtholder, "in order to spare myself the pain of bidding you farewell, Adam. But now I find that my heart is stronger than my will, and I must embrace you once more before I go!"

While the Elector embraced his favorite and received from him assurances of perpetual fidelity, Count Adolphus Schwarzenberg approached the Princess Charlotte Louise, who stood silent and apart in a window recess, looking out upon the street with pallid countenance and eyes reddened by weeping.

"Louise," he whispered softly, "Louise, you——"

But before he could utter another word, Princess Hedwig stood beside him, addressing him with amiable speech, and the Electoral Prince approached his sister and offered her his arm to conduct her to the carriage. She walked along, leaning on her brother's arm, without once lifting her eyes from the ground, deeply humiliated by the thought that her lover had caused her to wait for him in vain. A quarter of an hour later the two clumsy vehicles containing the Electoral family rolled out of the castle gate and struck into the road leading to Königsberg. The White Lady had driven away the Elector George William, and he was nevermore to behold the palace of his fathers.

The White Lady had saved Prince Frederick William, and as he now drove through the gates of Berlin in that clumsy old coach he said to himself, with joyful anticipation: "I shall see you again, Berlin! I shall see you again, dear town of my fathers! I shall come back, and, please God, not humbly and enslaved as I go away to-day, but as a Prince, who is lord

within his own domains, with God in his heart, a clear sky overhead, and no Schwarzenbergs upon the horizon!"

Wearily and panting for breath the poor horses dragged the heavy carriage through the sands of the Mark, but within sat the Electoral Prince—within sat Cæsar and his fortunes.

BOOK IV.

I.—The Youthful Sovereign.

The Elector George William had been gathered to his fathers. On the 1st of December in the year 1640 he had at last closed his weary eyes, and bidden farewell to a world which had brought him much grief and disquiet, little joy and repose, much mortification and disappointment, never a single triumph or solid satisfaction.

The Elector George William had been gathered to his fathers, and his son Frederick William was Elector now. Two melancholy years of privation and humiliation, resignation and oppression, had he passed at his father's side, ever suspected by him, ever watched with jealous eyes, and forcibly denied any participation in the administration of the government, ever struggling with care, even for daily food, and forced to borrow at usurious rates of interest to provide even a meager support for his little household. It had been a severe school, but Frederick William had passed through it with a brave spirit and cheerful determination. Across the dark and gloomy present his clear eye had ever been directed to the future, and hope had ever lingered at his side, holding him erect when overburdened by care, consoling him when vexed and humiliated by his father's unjust suspicions and ill will. Not unexpectedly had the Elector George William died; full two months before his summons came, the two physicians in ordinary, after holding a long consultation with the celebrated Königsberg doctors, announced to the Electoral Prince that the Elector was drawing near his end, and that his dropsy and insidious fever were slowly but inevitably causing death.

The Electoral Prince had had time, therefore, to prepare for the momentous hour which would call him from obscurity and inactivity—time to summon to him those whom he wished to have at his side in the critical hour. Up to the period of his father's death he had been an obedient, submissive son; yet he had well known that as soon as George William closed his eyes he would have to step into his place and be his successor. And he would be a worthy successor! That he had vowed, clasping his father's cold hand. He had told his mother so when, beside her husband's corpse, she had blessed him in his new dignity, and besought his protection and love for herself and her two daughters! Yes, he would be his father's worthy successor; he would force the world to respect him. Such were his thoughts as, on the day after his father's decease, he for the first time entered his cabinet, and seated himself before the great writing table at which the Elector had been wont to sit.

To the last day of his life George William had himself held the reins of government, and, in the timid jealousy of his heart, angrily refused all aid, all assistance. No one had dared to open and read the incoming rescripts nor to attend to neglected business.

On the table lay whole piles of unopened letters and rescripts, whole heaps of acts awaiting only the Electoral signature. Frederick William laid his hand on these acts which he had now to sign, and his large, deep-blue eyes were uplifted to Heaven.

"Lord!" he cried fervently—"Lord, make known to me the way in which I should go!"

These were the first words spoken by Frederick William on commencing his reign, and on seating himself before his father's cabinet table, which was now his own.

He took up the first of the sealed documents and opened it. It was a representation from the cities of Berlin and Cologne, whose magistrates implored the Elector to furnish them some redress for their affliction and want, and besought him, even now, to make peace with the Swedes, and to command the Stadtholder in the Mark to institute a milder government in the unhappy province. In heartrending words they pic-

tured the distresses of both wretched cities, which had so far declined that they had now hardly seven thousand inhabitants, while ten years ago they had numbered more than twenty thousand. "But fire, pillage, and oppressions," so the writing wound up, "have reduced us to the most extreme poverty. Many of the inhabitants have made haste to end their wretched lives by means of water, cord, or knife, and the rest are upon the point of forsaking their homes, with their wives and children, preferring exile to remaining longer in these cities, the abodes of pestilence and war. The Stadtholder in the Mark, however, feels no pity for our sufferings, and just recently, despite our entreaties, has had all the suburbs burned down, because the Swedish general Stallhansch was on the march against us. We most urgently entreat your highness to have compassion upon us in our low estate, and to instruct the Stadtholder to slacken the severity of his rule and to spare us in our grief." *

Sighing, Frederick William laid aside the melancholy writing, and took up the next in order. It was a petition from the town of Prenzlow, not less sad, not less moving than the first. The magistracy of Prenzlow likewise prayed for compassion and redress of grievances, and painted in moving words the misery of town and country. "Since," they wrote, "on account of the unhappy war existing, the fields hereabout had been lying idle for some years, such unheard-of scarcity had ensued that the people had not only been driven to making use of unusual articles of diet, such as dogs, cats, nay, even dead asses lying in the streets, but impelled by the fierce pangs of hunger, in town as well as in the country, had fallen upon, cooked, and devoured one another!" †

"Much to be pitied land, and much to be pitied Prince as well," sighed Frederick William. "A heavy, an almost intolerable burden of government has fallen upon my shoulders. God help me to sustain it worthily!" ‡

* See von Orlich, The Great Elector, vol. i, p. 50.

† Von Orlich, p. 53.

‡ Frederick William's own words. See Droysen's History of Prussian Policy, vol. iii, p. 215.

He stretched out his hand for a third paper, when the door opened and old Dietrich entered.

"Well, old man," asked the Elector, "what brings you here? And why is your old face so merry to-day?"

"Because I have something pleasant to communicate to your highness. The two gentlemen whom your honor has been expecting are here. Colonel von Burgsdorf and——"

"Leuchtmar?" joyfully inquired the Elector, and, upon Dietrich's assent, he hurried himself toward the door. But after he had already stretched out his hand to turn the knob, he paused and slowly resumed his place in the middle of the room.

"Who is in the antechamber, besides?" he asked.

"Your highness, there are also without the gentlemen whom you summoned to an audience, the Chamberlain von Schulenburg, Herr von Kroytz, Herr von Kospoth, and the jeweler Dusnack."

"Those gentlemen may wait. Desire Herr von Kalkhun to come in."

Dietrich withdrew to the antechamber. The Elector's eyes were fastened upon the door with an expression of joyful expectancy. When it opened, and the tall, slender form of his friend and preceptor became visible, he could restrain himself no longer, but, forgetting all ceremony, all etiquette, hurried with outspread arms to meet Leuchtmar, and impetuously clasped him to his breast.

"God be praised that I have you again!" he said, with a warm embrace. "Once more I have found a father and a faithful friend. Welcome, you man of loyal heart, with my whole soul I bid you welcome!"

"And you, most gracious sir," cried Leuchtmar, deeply moved, "may you ever receive blessings and good gifts from on high, and always deserve them by noble thoughts and deeds! Such shall be my prayer evening and morning, and your highness shall verify my petition."

"Amen! God grant it!" said Frederick William solemnly. "And now, look at me, my friend, and let me read in your features that you are the same as of old."

"The same as of old, indeed!" smiled Leuchtmar. "These

two years have made an old man of me, and blanched my hair. I not merely longed after you, I grieved for you, knowing, as I did, what your grace had to bear and suffer. My heart was weighed down by grief and sorrow when I thought of what my beloved young master was undergoing."

"It is true," said Frederick William. "I have gone through hard trials and had many humiliations to endure. I have been treated as an adventurer and alien, unworthy of being employed or consulted. I was forever subjected to suspicion, and accused of coveting a throne before my time. If I asked after my father's health, he supposed I did so because I longed for his death; and if I made no inquiries, he accused me of indifference and want of natural affection. Alas! Leuchtmar, in the despair of my soul I have actually thought at times that the beggar on the street had an enviable fate compared with that of the Electoral Prince of Brandenburg—and—— But hush! hush! I will no longer think of the past with bitterness and chagrin. Reproach against my father shall never pass my lips. He rests with God, and, as his soul has entered into everlasting rest, let us not stir up the ashes of memory, but let peace be between father and son, eternal peace! And now, my friend, be the past forgotten and blotted out, with all its pains and wounds, and to the present and future only be our thoughts dedicated. You are here; I have again my most trusted friend; and in this the very first hour of our reunion I will confess something to you, Leuchtmar, which you indeed have long since known, but which I in the arrogance of youth have sometimes denied. I now feel that Socrates was a wise man when he said, 'Our education begins with the first day of life, nor is complete upon the last.' Fate has indeed placed me in a difficult school, and I am conscious that I am far from possessing adequate attainments, and that there is still much for me to study and digest. Therefore, my friend, from you I demand aid, that I may study to some purpose, and that I may at least take position in the world and among posterity as a first-class scholar."

"Ah! most gracious sir," said Leuchtmar, smiling, "you are already more than that, and have in these two years of

trial passed your *examen abiturientium* with great distinction."

"And think you I am entered now as a student in the high school of knowledge? Yes, Leuchtmar, such is indeed the case, and since it may well be that at times I shall make false steps, and commit blunders through inadvertence or misunderstanding, I demand of you to point out to me my mistakes."

"But, your highness, I might myself be the one in error, and in my short-sightedness attempt to teach one much better acquainted with the subject than myself."

"In such case let us weigh and compare opinions, when, surely, we shall discover the right. Only promise me this one thing, Leuchtmar, that on all occasions you will speak the truth to me, according to the best of your knowledge and perception—that you will not conceal it from me, even when you may know that it will be irksome and disagreeable to me. Will you promise me this, my friend?"

"I promise it. I promise, if your highness requests the expression of my views and opinions, to give you the truth, according to the inmost convictions of my heart."

"No, Leuchtmar, in important matters you must give me your opinion, even when I have not asked for it."

"Well then, your highness, I promise that too."

"And on my side I promise always to listen patiently, and not to become angry and excited, even when our opinions disagree and you utterly oppose me. You smile and shake your head. Probably you think that I can not keep my promise."

"I do think so, your highness; yet I fear not, and shall courageously weather the storm. I am already old and have witnessed the gathering of many a tempest, have seen the clouds burst, and afterward seen the bright blue sky and cheerful sunshine again. I shall not fear, even though the thunder roar and growl, for the thunder has somewhat of the voice of God, and there is something exalted and majestic in the lightning's flash. Only, gracious sir, it must not strike, but content itself with harmless shining. Will you most kindly promise me thus much, gracious sir?"

"Am I Jupiter, that I hold the lightning in my hand, and can direct its stroke?"

"Yes, indeed, sir, Jupiter you are, in your native element, amid the flash of lightnings and the roar of thunder."

The Elector smiled. "Tell me, Leuchtmar, am I really then of so fiery a temperament and of so passionate a nature? Why do you not answer me? The truth, Leuchtmar, the truth!"

"Well, the truth is that your highness is of quite a fiery temperament and of a tolerably passionate nature. But you are not to blame for this, for it was entailed upon you with your Hohenzollern blood. You are the worthy descendant of your ancestor Albert Achilles; and be glad of this, sir, for by sluggish blood and soft complexion great things have never been accomplished."

"Then you expect me to accomplish great things?"

"Yes, your highness, such are indeed my expectations, and I glory in them!"

"We will talk of this hereafter, friend," said the Elector, gently shaking his head. "But now let us forget what I have become since yesterday, and consider that I have a heart, which is young still and full of love and ardor, despite all it has suffered. Two months ago, when the doctors told me that my dear father's case was hopeless, I dispatched secret messages to two friends, and requested them to come here and tarry in the neighborhood of Konigsberg until I should have them summoned by a courier. I was not willing to vex my father in the least degree during his lifetime, and would not even see my friends in secret, but preferred to wait patiently until I could do so openly.* The two friends whom I sent for to be near me were Burgsdorf and yourself, my Leuchtmar. But to you I gave previously another commission. Have you executed it?"

"Yes, your highness, I have executed it."

"You have been to Holland? At The Hague and at Doornward?"

"I have been there, gracious sir!"

"You have been there," repeated Frederick William, draw-

* The Elector's own words. *Vide* Droysen, vol. iii, p. 217.

ing a deep breath. "O Leuchtmar! you men in private life are happy because you are free. You can go whither you will, and follow the dictates of your own hearts. But we, poor slaves to our position, must accommodate ourselves to circumstances, and patiently submit to the laws of necessity. How often has it seemed to me as if my longings could not be repressed, as if I must break all bonds and hasten to that free and happy land where the fairest days of my life were passed. How often, in reflecting upon the past, has it seemed as if a fire were kindled in my breast, mounting in clear flames to my head to lay my reason in ashes. But I durst not allow this, and with my own sighs extinguished the leaping flames, and, Leuchtmar, shall I confess it? At this moment I am cowardly, and speak so much, because—yes, because I lack the courage to ask one open question. But I will be bold and courageous, I will conquer my poor, foolish heart. Tell me, then, Leuchtmar, what I *must* know! I sent you to Holland to obtain certain information with regard to the evil reports which have been circulated here. I gave no credit whatever to them, for I knew they were anxious that I should contract a certain marriage, and would therefore crush the love I was cherishing for another person. And yet this other lived within my heart, and when I closed my eyes I saw her before me in all her beauty and loveliness, and at night, when all the troubles of the day were over, and I was alone in my chamber, she was near me, speaking to me and consoling me with the sweet, kind words she whispered to my heart. Ah, you see, Leuchtmar, I am but a very young man, and—courage, courage! out with the question! Have you seen the Princess Ludovicka Hollandine?"

As Frederick William asked this question he walked to the window and turned his back to the room. A pause ensued, then Leuchtmar replied, in gentle, sorrowful tones, "No, gracious sir, I have not seen the Princess."

A shudder passed over the Prince's frame, but he did not turn around.

"Why did you not visit her? Why did you not see her, when I had commissioned you to speak with the Princess herself?"

"Most noble sir, I could not speak with the Princess, for she was no longer at The Hague."

"No longer in Holland?" asked the Elector, and his question sounded like a cry of grief wrung from a tortured heart. "Where was she then? Where was Ludovicka?"

"Most noble sir, you have imposed upon me the duty of always telling you the truth, but at this moment I feel it to be a difficult duty."

"Perform it, Leuchtmar, I require you to do so! Where was the Princess Ludovicka, if she was no longer with her mother?"

"Your highness, the Princess Ludovicka Hollandine has voluntarily forsaken her mother and her family, and at first they knew not whither she had gone."

"And do they know now?"

"The Electress of the Palatinate had received her first letter from the Princess the day before I waited upon her, and, as the Electress had ever honored me with her confidence, she communicated to me the contents of that letter."

"What were they? Quick, tell them quickly, that my heart may not break meanwhile. What was in the letter?"

"It said, most gracious sir, that of her own free will, and out of most tender love for the chosen of her heart, she had forsaken her mother's house because that Princess had refused her consent to her union with the man—these were her own words—with the man whom she loved above all others. It said, moreover, that the Princess had followed this man, the Count d'Entragues, to France, and that for the present she had withdrawn to a convent, preparatory to professing the Catholic religion and then marrying Count d'Entragues."*

The Elector uttered a hollow groan, and, putting both hands before his face, as if he were ashamed of what he felt, sank upon a chair, and sat long thus, breaking the silence with occasional sighs and groans.

Leuchtmar dared not interrupt this sacred silence even by a word, or to offer comfort to the agonized heart of the young Prince by words of consolation. He knew that strong

* Historical. *Vide* Letters of the Duchess of Orleans to Countess Louise.

heart must first vent its grief in order to gain repose, and that only from within could spring up that consolation which strengthens and sustains.

After a long pause, after a bitter inward conflict, Frederick William allowed his hands to drop, revealing a face pale as death and lips whose corners twitched convulsively.

"Leuchtmar," he said, "this is the baptism by which I am consecrated to my new office. It is, indeed, a baptism of tears, and has torn my wounded heart, I grant you. But such a baptism of tears was needed to wash from my heart all that could derogate from the lofty calling to which alone my whole being should be dedicated. No one on earth can accomplish anything great who has not first received a baptism of grief and tears. By such baptism the soul extricates itself from earthly wishes and selfish desires, and he who would be a thorough man and accomplish great things must be lord of himself, and have no wishes for himself, but to attain glory and honor! And so I now shake the past from my soul as a torn and tattered garment, and would despise myself if even a sensation of pain were left behind. No, no, I am free! My heart is coffined, and I shall close the lid and bid it an eternal farewell!"

"Your heart coffined, your highness!" said Leuchtmar gently. "You think so now, but I tell you it will again rise from the dead, and beat with full ardor and glow, for, God be thanked, the heart of man is a tenacious thing, and dies not from one dagger-thrust. Its wounds can be healed, and then it is so much the stronger because it knows what it can suffer and overcome!"

"Enough now, my friend, enough!" cried Frederick William, shaking his head so violently that his brown locks fluttered in wild disorder. "Thus I shake off an unworthy love and all vain lamentations. Now, Leuchtmar, I am the man, the Elector. A very young man, you will say, but one who has stood the brunt of battle and fire, who in days has lived through years, and consequently is old, for my twenty years count double. Baron von Leuchtmar, I have much to discuss with you, and I summoned you here for important consultations, but stay—a man is without whom I can keep

waiting no longer, for his time is valuable, and he who makes a workman wait robs him of his capital. I beg you, Leuchtmar, to open the door and call the jeweler Dusnack."

Leuchtmar hastened to obey this order. As he turned toward the door Frederick William once more passed his hand rapidly over his face, and for a moment pressed it to his eyes. As he drew it away he felt a drop fall burning upon his hand, and it shone there like a bright diamond, but—his eyes were now dry and glittered with the fire of resolution.

"Well, Master Dusnack," exclaimed Frederick William to the approaching jeweler, "have you brought us, as directed, a few seal rings, from which to make our selection?"

"Here they are, your Electoral Highness," replied the jeweler, holding out a little box and handing it open to the Elector. Frederick William examined with interest the bright and sparkling rings, which were in separate compartments, and nodded kindly to the jeweler.

"You are a skillful workman, and your rings please me well," he said. "These things are tastefully designed and prettily executed. You must have very good workmen, and it pleases me that such things are made in our country. For I suppose, of course, these beautiful rings emanate from your own workshop."

"Most gracious sir, I would that it were so, and it is not my fault, indeed, that it is otherwise. I have been long in foreign lands and studied and worked in the first jewelry establishments of Paris. But I find no apprentices here capable of executing such artistic and delicate work, and can only have ordinary gold and silver ware made here, such as forks, spoons, mourning rings, and articles of that kind; but for my finer ornaments and such costly rings as these I must send to Paris and Lyons, where the goldsmith's art flourishes, while it is frightfully depressed here, both for the want of purchasers and artisans."

"Then we must see to it," said Frederick William, "that such times are ushered in, that men shall feel free to purchase golden trinkets, and that clever workers in gold be attracted here, in order that we may dispense with foreign manufactures. As soon as the times become somewhat more tranquil, we,

too, will have need of goods of that sort, for not long since all the jewels of our house were stolen.* But I tell you, Master Dusnack, we shall only buy such things as have been designed and executed at home. Therefore exert yourself, and procure good workmen. For this time I must needs content myself with foreign wares and select a seal ring. I therefore take this one with the ruby, and you must engrave our country's coat of arms upon it without delay."

"Your highness's orders shall be obeyed," replied the jeweler respectfully. "Does your highness merely wish the coat of arms upon the seal, or would you like a motto added?"

"Yes, master, a motto shall be added, to run thus, 'Lord, make known to me the way in which I should go.' Will you write it down, master, that you may not forget it?"

"Your Electoral Highness, it is not necessary, for you have impressed it on my heart."

"Go then, master, and inscribe it for me right plainly on the stone."

The Elector turned to Baron Leuchtmar von Kalkhun as soon as the jeweler had taken his departure, saying, "Now for you, friend, and our plans of government."

* In the year 1638 a ship, on board of which were all the Electoral jewels to the amount of sixty thousand gulden, was plundered by a detachment from the corps of General Monticuculi, and all the jewels abstracted. Count Schwarzenberg had three officers concerned in it arrested, and carried to Spandow for trial. Although the Emperor himself desired the release of the imperial officers, the Stadtholder not only refused this, but even subjected the three officers to the torture, in order to extort from them a confession of the place where the jewels had been hid. But they confessed nothing, meanwhile remaining in confinement until the Elector Frederick William restored to them their freedom. *Vide* von Orlich, The Great Elector, vol. i, p. 53.

II.—Plans for the Future.

"Yes, friend, I want to discuss government affairs with you," continued the Elector, with a faint smile, sinking back in the armchair before the writing table. "Sit down, Leuchtmar, quite close to me, for I shall now disclose to you what no other mortal ear must hear; I shall reveal to you my thoughts and plans. Man is, after all, but a weak and tender creature, and it is a necessity with him to have some trusted soul on whom he can rely for sympathy, and to whom he can tell all that moves his inner being. To me, Leuchtmar, you are that trusted soul, and in this hour I will make known to you the inmost recesses of my heart. You shall learn who I am, what I think, and what are my aspirations, that you may always comprehend and appreciate me, standing with ever-ready succor at my side. For I hope you have no engagements elsewhere, and from this moment enter my service?"

"I have hitherto lived in quiet and retirement at Cologne on the Rhine, waiting for the hour which should summon me to my gracious master's presence, for you are the only Sovereign upon earth whom I would serve, and to you belong my being, thoughts, and all that in me is of energy and skill."

"I have counted on you, Leuchtmar, and well I knew that my reliance would not be in vain. You must aid and sustain me, for I stand in urgent need of wise friends, of diligent, faithful workers, in order to gain the goal which I have placed before me in the future, and to execute the schemes which I have planned. In the first place, Leuchtmar, do you know properly who I am?"

"Yes, your highness," replied Leuchtmar, smiling. "I think I know right well. You are the youthful hero, the Hercules to whom the gods have committed the twelve difficult tasks, that he may prove himself a demi-god, and who now begins his work with the zeal of courage and the inspiration of faith."

"The comparison may be slightly applicable," said the Elector, "and as far as the Augean stable is concerned. I, too, have my stable to cleanse; only it belongs not to Augias, but

to Schwarzenberg. Still, I will try to purify it. But I must set about my undertaking with dexterous hands; of that, however, let us speak hereafter. I shall first consider your simile, drawn from the story of Hercules. Do you know, Leuchtmar, the names of my twelve tasks, and their extent? I ask you once more, do you know who I am, or, rather, what my name is? Look, there lies the document which I am just on the point of sending to my good subjects, and by means of which I shall notify them of my assumption of the reins of government. Just read the heading, Leuchtmar."

Leuchtmar took the paper handed him and read: "'We, Frederick William, Marquis of Brandenburg, Lord High Chancellor and Elector of the Holy Roman Empire, Duke of Prussia, Julich, Cleves, Stettin, Pomerania, Cassuben, and Vandalia, as also Duke of Silesia, Croatia, and Jägerndorf, Burgrave of Nuremberg, Prince of Rugen, Count of Markberg and Ravensberg, Baron of Ravenstein.'"

"Enough!" cried the Elector. "You have now read the outlines of my Herculean task, you now know who I am. A Prince of long titles, not one of which has its foundation in truth and reality. And this is my Herculean task, to make these titles real, and to give a good kernel to these empty nut shells. Look, Leuchtmar, there is a map. Let us examine it and compare it with my titles, for it is a map corresponding finely with these titles, and on which all the counties and provinces pertaining to them are designated. Marquis of Brandenburg, that is my first title, and you would naturally suppose that this, at least, was veritable, for the Mark is the oldest possession of our house, and my ancestor, the Burgrave Frederick von Nuremberg, was invested with it by the Emperor. But what do I obtain from the Mark? Friend and foe have quartered there, until they have changed it into a desert; famine and pestilence hold sway there, and the despairing inhabitants have left their fields untilled and wander about shelterless and hungry. The only prosperous man there, possessed of power and consideration, is the Stadtholder in the Mark, Count Adam von Schwarzenberg. The Mark suffers and groans, but he is of glad heart, and the distress of the people touches him not. What cares he for land

or people, save in so far as they conduce to the furtherance of his own ends, and do you know what those ends are?"

"He is an Imperialist and a strict Catholic," said Leuchtmar, "and it must be confessed that he would rather see the whole Mark go to destruction than behold it Protestant and independent."

"Yes, he has let the Mark Brandenburg go to destruction!" cried the Elector, with flashing eyes. "Catholic and Imperialist he would have it. And I can not reach him, he knows very well that I must spare him, and that *he*, the powerful, opposes *me*, the powerless. To him have the commandants of the fortresses and the soldiers sworn allegiance; the Emperor protects him, and would esteem it an act of rebellion against imperial majesty itself if I were to depose Schwarzenberg from office. It would be a departure from the course pursued by the Mark for twenty years past, for, since Schwarzenberg has flourished as Stadtholder, the Emperor has been the real lord of the Mark, and not an order nor rescript ever issued from my father's cabinet to which the Emperor had not given his consent, or of which he had not previous knowledge. I must therefore for the present still suffer Schwarzenberg to be lord of the Mark, for I have not power to defy the Emperor and call down upon myself his rage. The Lord High Chancellor and Elector of the Holy Roman Empire must for the present bow humbly to the Emperor, and submit in silence to the evils of his lot. My duchy of Pomerania the Swedes have appropriated to themselves, and I can not, as I should like, wrest it from them by force of arms, for I have no weapons, no soldiers, no army; I must now try to come to an amicable understanding with them, and, if possible, make peace with them. In Julich and Cleves I am duke, too, as my title vouches, but to be so really I must first rescue these countries from the Dutch, and then be able to defend them against the cupidity of France. And my duchies of Silesia, Croatia, and Jägerndorf? The Emperor has taken possession of them as if they were his own fiefs, and he will be little likely to restore them to the powerless Elector of Brandenburg. Neither will the Saxons easily relinquish to the weak Elector Magdeburg and Halberstadt, which coun-

ties they hold enthralled. Alas! Leuchtmar, you see of all my vast possessions I only retain the empty titles."

"But one country your highness has omitted in your enumeration, and there, undoubtedly, you are undisputed Sovereign, no enemy having supplanted you in this land. You are Duke of Prussia, and there, at least, ruler also!"

"Yes, I am Duke of Prussia—that is to say, if King Wladislaus of Poland will condescend to invest me with this duchy, and allow me to go to Warsaw, humbly to kneel to swear allegiance to him, and acknowledge myself one of his vassals. Until he has done so, I am not the legalized ruler even here in Prussia, and the King of Poland will already consider it as an infringement upon his supremacy that I have not forthwith dismissed the Prussian chamber of deputies, which held its sitting in my father's lifetime, but allowed it to prolong its session. There, too, as at the imperial court, I must give fair words, must show myself humble and obedient, so as not to excite untimely enmity against myself, and rouse the mighty against the weak. For what refuge would remain to me, or where would I find support, if the Emperor of Germany and the King of Poland should threaten me with their enmity?"

"I should think the Swedes would be delighted to have your highness for an ally, to stand with them against the Emperor and the German Empire, and the States-General, too, would gladly give you the right hand of confederation."

"Oh, yes, the Swedes would gladly accept me as their ally, provided that I would voluntarily resign to them Pomerania and Rügen, renouncing all claim to these lands; and the States would gladly extend to me the right hand of fellowship, only I must have first laid down in this hand the duchies of Cleves and Julich as an offering of friendship! But such a thing would I never do, and never shall I peaceably resign the smallest strip of land that should be mine to purchase thereby repose for myself. Up to this time I have enjoyed only the title to my lands, but it must and shall be now the purpose of my whole life to substantiate these claims, and not merely to conquer back what is my own, but, an' it please God, to enlarge my territories and give to them unity and

compactness. I am now a Prince only by my armorial bearings, but I *will* be a veritable Prince. I now wear only the most delapidated semblance of a Prince's mantle, inflated by hollow wind, but I shall change it into a purple mantle, such as no German Prince would be ashamed of, which every one in the German Empire shall respect, yea, even the Emperor himself."

"And you will gain your end," cried Leuchtmar, "yes, you will gain it. It stands written on your lofty brow, it shines forth from your fiery eyes, and is spoken by every feature of your noble, energetic face. You will gain your end. From the confusion and chaos of the present times you will emerge as a distinguished, mighty Prince; out of nothingness and disorder you will construct a powerful state, and to your towering titles give a firm basis of strength and truth!"

"Amen! God grant it!" said Frederick William, piously lifting his large eyes to Heaven. "It seems now, indeed, as if it were an unattainable goal," he continued, after a pause, "and to no one else would I confess it, for I would only become the scorn and derision of my enemies."

"But the delight of your friends!" cried Leuchtmar, deeply moved, "the invigorator and uplifter of your friends!"

"Friends, say you? Where are my friends? Look abroad throughout the whole German Empire, the whole of Europe, and then tell me where my friends are. I have not even friends in my next-door neighbors, not even in my nearest relations! Yes, were I rich and influential, had I protection to give and benefits to dispense, then would the Princes far and near gladly bethink themselves of the claims of consanguinity, and overwhelm me with civilities and attentions. But I am powerless, and they dread lest I should need their protection and their influence; therefore are they forgetful of family ties! But they shall find themselves mistaken in me, my dear relatives! They shall be forced some day to acknowledge that the Elector of Brandenburg is self-sustaining, and stands erect without the aid of foreign supports. You look at me doubtfully, and perhaps think me a braggart, promising great things which I may never be able to perform?

It would seem so, indeed, now, for where are the means for accomplishing such aims? Wretched and in the process of dissolution is all about me, nowhere do I see determined friends, efficient followers!"

"Oh, gracious sir, in that you go too far! You know yourself how much Schwarzenberg is hated in all your territories, how ardently all patriots long for his deposition from the government; for the league with the Emperor is detestable to everybody, and fear of Catholic domination and desire for the Swedish alliance prevail among all your subjects."

"Yes," cried the Elector, "adherents of Sweden there are in my dominions, and Schwarzenberg has indeed opponents enough. But he has friends as well, whom he has purchased with his good money and his protection. But tell me, where is an Electoral party, one deserving the name by its unity and determination, a party which looks not to the right or left, but straight ahead in the direction that I shall take? The old friends of my house are dispersed, hunted into banishment, exiled, or dead; on whom else could I depend? All positions in the army and government, all offices has Schwarzenberg filled with his own creatures; and should I venture to step in their way, and endeavor to effect their and his ruin, I might easily come to ruin myself. In what direction, then, can I look for help?"

"To yourself, most noble sir, to your own mind and heart!" cried Leuchtmar, with enthusiasm.

"It is as you say, I should be a fool were I to seek protection elsewhere. Protection from the Emperor, the empire, Poland? Protection from comrades in the faith or blood relations? My empire is within myself, and by God's help the foundations shall be laid! 'Man forges his own fortunes.' That is a good old proverb. Well, I will try to be a good smith. I have played anvil long enough, and hard enough have been the blows dealt me by Count Schwarzenberg. I shall now try being the fist that guides the hammer, and I think I have a tolerably strong fist, that will be able so to wield the hammer as to fashion for myself a worthy scepter."

"A great and noble task has God committed to your highness," said Leuchtmar; "to you is it given to create your own

state, and what you shall be hereafter you will owe to your own powers."

"And to the assistance of true servants, tried friends and followers!" cried the Elector, cordially extending his hand to his faithful counselor, "although now I only know two men on whom I can rely—yourself and Burgsdorf. But together we form no contemptible trio, and I am confident that great results will follow our efforts, and, in order that you may see what I am projecting, tarry here while I call in old Burgsdorf."

With alert step the Elector moved to the door and opened it. "Colonel von Burgsdorf!" he cried, then turned, strode through the cabinet and seated himself in the armchair before his father's writing table.

In the door of the entrance hall now appeared Colonel von Burgsdorf, his broad, red face wearing an embarrassed expression. Standing still in the doorway, he looked across at the Elector, who, his back half turned, seemed to take no notice of his approach.

"No doubt," said Burgsdorf to himself, "he has had me summoned in order to give me my discharge; he has not yet forgotten how desperate I was in the year '38. It is over with you, Conrad, and you can go home, because, like the old ass that you are, in sooth, you uttered aloud the pent-up agony of your soul!"

But while he was talking thus to himself with deep resentment, his countenance expressed nothing but devotion and anxiety; in humble, soldierly attitude he stood in the door. The Elector had his eyes fixed upon some papers lying on the table before him, and seemed absorbed in their perusal. Leuchtmar at last ventured to accost him.

"Gracious sir," he said softly, "Colonel von Burgsdorf, whom you called, has come in and is waiting for your orders."

"He is waiting!" cried the Elector. "Then I shall certainly have to ask his pardon in the end, for well I know that Colonel Burgsdorf does not understand waiting."

"Without doubt," repeated Burgsdorf to himself, "he has summoned me merely to give me my discharge."

"Colonel von Burgsdorf!" now cried the Elector, turning half toward him with grave, severe countenance, "just tell me how strong was the regiment which you enlisted for the Electoral army last year?"

"Most gracious sir, I enlisted two thousand four hundred men."

"That is to say," cried the Elector sternly, "you obtained the bounty money for recruiting two thousand four hundred men; but I would be glad to learn of you how many of those men actually existed."

"Your highness," stammered Burgsdorf in confusion, "I do not understand what your grace means. If I obtained bounty money for two thousand four hundred men, they certainly existed."

"So one would suppose, indeed," replied the Elector; "yet it can not have been, for before me lies a letter from Count Schwarzenberg to my father, and only hear what the Stadtholder in the Mark writes. Leuchtmar, come here please and read."

Leuchtmar hastened forward, and, taking the paper which the Elector held out to him, read: "'It is to be lamented that the officers contrive to pocket so much press money and hardly produce one out of every six men said to have been enlisted. Colonel von Kehrdorf received pay and rations for twelve hundred men, and yet had not over eighty; General von Klitzing's regiment ought to be two thousand strong, and in reality numbers only six hundred; Colonel Conrad von Burgsdorf gives out that he has two thousand four hundred recruits, and there are not quite six hundred of them.'"

"That is a lie—a base lie!" cried Burgsdorf, whose face was purple with passion. "The Stadtholder in the Mark has always been my enemy and opponent, and if he maintains that I only enlisted six hundred men——"

"He maintains something quite untrue," interrupted the Elector; "but he maintains no such thing. You interrupted Leuchtmar; let him read to the end, and hear the conclusion." Leuchtmar read on: "'And if you pick perhaps two hundred able-bodied men out of the six hundred, there remain four

hundred feeble, sickly fellows, who would fall down like dead flies on the very first march.' " *

" You see that Schwarzenberg does not maintain that you enlisted six hundred able-bodied men."

" Your highness! " cried Burgsdorf, trembling with passion, " this I see, that you have had me called here in order to dismiss me, to banish me forever from your presence—and yet I have served you so faithfully, and have always hoped that you would forgive me."

" Forgive? " asked the Elector. " Had I anything to forgive in you? "

" Most gracious sir, that time after your return from The Hague I let my old heart carry me away; it was wholly wild and ungovernable and forgot the deference due your grace."

" Ah, I remember now," said the Elector, gently nodding his head. " That time when you wanted to make a revolution and required me to place myself at your head. You wanted to make of the poor little Electoral Prince a mighty rebel, and were even so kind as to promise that when with your help he had crushed Schwarzenberg he should become his father's prime minister and Stadtholder in the Mark."

" Your highness," cried Burgsdorf indignantly, " those were well-meant schemes, and originated in the excess of our love for you."

" Only, if I had adopted them, my father would have easily subdued the princely rebel with the Emperor's support. The Stadtholder in the Mark would then have had the pleasure of seeing upon the scaffold the Prince who had dared rebel against his own father, as befell Prince Carlos of Spain, when he revolted against his father, King Philip. I thought a little about that unhappy, misguided Prince, and profited by his example. You probably did not think of him, Burgsdorf, and fell into a great rage. I am glad you remember that day, for actually I had forgotten it."

" Most gracious sir, I would like to bite out my own tongue and swallow it," screamed Burgsdorf, raving. " I am a genuine old ass, and you do well to dismiss me forthwith; for I

* Droysen, History of Prussian Politics, p. 180.

deserve nothing better, and am served quite right. Just speak out at once, your highness. I am discharged, am I not?"

"Quietly, Burgsdorf!" commanded the Elector sternly. "I am no longer the Electoral Prince at whom you can scold and bluster, as you did that time in the palace of Berlin."

"You always go back to the old story," groaned Burgsdorf.

"And you," said Frederick William, "you are just as impatient as you were then. You cried murder and death, because the Electoral Prince would not do your will! I told you—I remember that very well now—I told you that I would learn and wait. I begged you to do the same and wait also. But you, you would not wait; you cried out that you had already waited twenty years, and that now your patience was exhausted. You had no compassion on the youth of eighteen years, who had just come out of a foreign land, and hardly knew how to distinguish friend from foe because he was not acquainted with the condition of things. And yet you were already old and in your twenty years of waiting ought to have learned a little prudence! But you had learned nothing at all and could not wait, and gave me up with wild impatience because I would not be guilty of criminal disrespect toward my father."

"Most gracious sir, you cut me to the quick! Each of your words is a dagger aimed right at my heart. Let me go; let it bleed in solitude and retirement."

And old von Burgsdorf turned and went to the door.

"Stay there!" called out the Elector in commanding tone, arising from his seat and standing proudly erect. Burgsdorf, who had just laid his hand upon the door latch, let it glide down, and stood abashed and humble.

"You gave me up and forsook me that time in Berlin," continued Frederick William, "scolded and upbraided me, merely because I wished to learn and wait. That proves to me that you have never learned and never waited. Learn now, Colonel Conrad von Burgsdorf. Withdraw into that window recess, and wait until I speak to you again and tell you my decision with regard to you." And once more the Elector opened

the door of the antechamber and called Chamberlain Werner von Schulenburg into his cabinet.

III.—Diplomatic Missions.

"Schulenburg," said the Elector to the advancing chamberlain, "you will set out immediately. Go to Berlin and inform the Stadtholder in the Mark, Count von Schwarzenberg, of my father's death. Announce to his excellency that it is my urgent and pressing request, that he continue to burden himself with the duties of the Stadtholdership."

An involuntary growl issued from the window where Burgsdorf was stationed. The Elector took no notice of it, and proceeded: "Moreover, request the Stadtholder in my name to write to me immediately, advising me what to do with regard to the Regensburg Diet, because we can not now with the required dispatch rightly apprehend and maturely consider the matter on account of our great affliction.*

A second growl issued from the window, and called a slight, passing smile to Frederick William's face.

"Then," continued the Elector, "notify the Stadtholder that I shall be glad to retain the present governors and garrisons of the forts; but that it would please me if we could inflict some injury upon the enemy at one place or the other; but, mindful of his hitherto glorious and successful management, I feel that I need only direct his attention in a special manner to the fortresses."

Old Burgsdorf's growl now became almost a shriek of pain. "It is unheard of," he said, in quite an audible voice.

With a proud movement of the head the Elector turned to him. "Burgsdorf," he said, "you were to learn to wait; be silent, then, as becomes an humble scholar."

Again the Elector turned to the chamberlain. "That is all I have to say to you, Schulenburg. I hope you have for-

* The Elector's own words. *Vide* Droysen, History of Prussian Politics, vol. iii, p. 220.

gotten nothing, and that you will punctiliously execute every command."

"I trust that your highness is convinced of my zeal and fidelity," replied the chamberlain, bowing reverentially. "I shall punctiliously execute all your orders, and have only to ask further when I am to set off?"

"Immediately," said the Elector, "and travel post haste. Farewell! But hark! Schulenburg, you have obtained my official dispatches, now I shall add a little private errand. When you have communicated all this to the Stadtholder, exactly as directed, then converse a little with him in the most friendly manner, and in the course of conversation, as if of your own accord, sound Count Schwarzenberg as to his inclination to pay us a speedy visit in Prussia, the better to consult with us concerning the onerous duties of the administration. Then ask him casually, but in quite an innocent manner, whom he would recommend meanwhile as his substitute.* And now, God speed you, Schulenburg, go and carry out all my orders to the letter. As you pass out, send in to me the two gentlemen waiting in the antechamber."

With a condescending nod of the head, he offered his hand to the chamberlain, who pressed it fervently to his lips, and then left the cabinet with hasty steps.

"And now for you, gentlemen," cried the Elector, advancing a few paces to meet Herr von Kreytz and Herr von Kospoth, who were just entering the cabinet. "I have an important commission to intrust to both of you. You are both to proceed to Poland and announce my father's death to King Wladislaus. That is your affair specially, John von Kospoth. You know how to frame courteous speeches, and will inform the King that my father (peace be to his ashes!) has not been a more submissive vassal than his successor Frederick expects to be; you will tell him that the Dukes of Prussia are very faithful and obedient servants to the King of Poland, and know very well that they should be his Majesty's most humble vassals."

Again a passionate murmur proceeded from the window, and Burgsdorf's flushed, angry countenance appeared between

* The Elector's own words. See von Orlich, History of Prussia.

the silk curtains. The Elector saw this by a furtive glance, and again something like a smile passed over his countenance.

Turning to the second gentleman, he continued: "You, Wolfgang von Kreytz, will present my most submissive and respectful greetings to the King of Poland, and acquaint him with the fact that I take my predecessor's place as duke in the dukedom of Prussia. Inform him that I recognize the King as lord paramount, and humbly sue for investiture. Tell him that I have hitherto forborne to perform the functions of ruler, and committed the government to a board of regency, and am meanwhile striving with the greatest diligence to acquire a knowledge of the rights and privileges of the land. Pay, both of you, the most polite and friendly court to the King and all his ministers. Asseverate everywhere that we know right well that our succession in Prussia depends wholly upon the King's choice, and that we would naturally desire to present ourselves in person and swear allegiance to his Majesty. And after you have impressed all these statements fully upon his mind, add that to our deepest regret we can not come immediately, on account of the bad condition of our hereditary estates and manifold business pertaining to the Roman Empire, which just now prevent us from undertaking the journey. Then petition for a gracious dispensation from personal attendance, and request his Majesty to grant a written order for the feoffment. Should the King make known to you through his counselors that he will not grant this written order, then desire a private audience of the King, and represent to him that we have been forced to assume the government, and deprecate his displeasure. Wait also upon the most prominent ministers, and represent the same thing to them. By your eloquence and zeal I hope that you will accomplish your purpose, and bring me the investiture. To this end spare neither flattery nor fair words."

"Most gracious sir," asked John von Kospoth, with a meaning smile, "but if, unfortunately, flattery and fair words prove of no avail, what must we do then?"

"You answer that question for me, Wolfgang von Kreytz," said the Elector.

"Most gracious sir," exclaimed the young baron spirit-

edly, "if all entreaties and persuasions fail to move, I think it will be time to assert your Electoral dignity, and to have recourse to a little threatening. We should give the King of Poland to understand that you claim the succession in Prussia by virtue of your own good right; that your father, the Elector George William, undertook the government before the investiture, and that you will defend your duchy of Prussia with all the means at your command, and will never give it up."

"Very good," said a deep voice from behind the window curtain.

"Do you mean to speak so too, John von Kospoth?" asked the Elector.

"If flattery and persuasions bring forth no fruit," replied Kospoth, "it would be a satisfaction to me, too, to threaten."

"A poor satisfaction!" cried the Elector, "unless we could forthwith follow up our threat by action, and send out our regiments to declare war! No, sirs, if you try in vain to bribe with fair words, then we must resort to money! Money is also a weapon, and, if report speak truly, an effective one among the Polish lords, their King himself respecting it. In extremity, therefore, if you can not go forward at all, then have their Majesties, the King as well as Queen, notified, by means of some trusty person, that if we obtain the grant of the government on the spot, and have no difficulty with regard to investiture, we shall pay to both their Majesties, as a bonus, the sum of sixty thousand Polish florins, and afterward wait upon the great chancellor, vice chancellor, and lord high chancellor, salute these gentlemen from me, and promise each one of them ten thousand Polish florins. Take care, though, to stipulate for some time to be allowed us for the fulfillment of these promises, for where the money is to come from is as yet a riddle to ourselves. Such is my commission, gentlemen. Hasten to execute it."

"And now," exclaimed the Elector, when the two gentlemen had left the cabinet, "now, Colonel von Burgsdorf, you have received your first lesson, and have learned to wait a little. Come forward now; I have something to say to you."

"And I, sir," called out Burgsdorf, as he rushed forth

from the bay window and threw himself on his knees before the Elector, "first of all, I have something to say to you. Your highness, above all things I must beg your pardon from the bottom of my heart, and confess to you the evil thoughts that led me to suppose that the Elector at twenty years of age did not understand government and was only a timid young gentleman. I see now that you are far wiser and more prudent than the old fool Burgsdorf, and that you have learned more in your twenty years than will ever penetrate my thick skull. You are a great statesman, your highness; on my knees I implore your pardon for having doubted you, and beseech you, reject me not, sir! Forget the nonsense I gave utterance to that time at Berlin, and take the old broadsword into your service. It desires nothing better than to be worn out in your service, to fly out of its scabbard at your bidding and slash away at the enemy."

"To slash away at the enemy!" repeated the Elector. "First of all, stand up, old colonel. There," he continued, smiling, holding out his hand to him, "I must help you a little, for your old limbs have grown stiff in my father's service. And now, just tell me, old broadsword, what you think of it. How will you attack the enemy for me now? Enemies enough we have, indeed, but too few soldiers, I should think, to cope with them. Or think you that we could soon set an army on foot? Would you go out to battle with your regiment of two thousand six hundred men, and win back for me my contested territories?"

"I beg your highness not to speak of my two thousand six hundred men. You know well that they have long since melted away, because there was no money wherewith to pay them."

"Well then," said the Elector, "I will gratify you by forgetting that splendid regiment, and by no longer reminding you of the things that were. But this I tell you, Burgsdorf, under my administration everything must correspond, and what is noted down on paper must really exist. And now we shall see if you are acquainted with our military affairs."

"Alas! most noble sir," sighed Burgsdorf, "would that I did not know, for it is a most sorrowful knowledge to an

old soldier and in a most distressing condition is the Brandenburg military department."

"Yes, indeed!" exclaimed the Elector. "The knights no longer take horse, the citizens no longer care to defend their towns and gates, the States refuse to pay subsidies for the support of the army, and our coffers are exhausted. It is no wonder if there can be no talk of an army. How much infantry and cavalry have we in all, Burgsdorf?"

"Most gracious sir," sighed the colonel, "in the Mark and Prussia together we have not more than twenty companies of infantry, allowing a hundred and twenty-five men to each."

"That would make two thousand five hundred men," said the Elector—"a small nucleus for an army, truly; but something, nevertheless, provided that these men are attached to me, and owe fealty to none besides myself."

"But that is just our misfortune," said Burgsdorf; "these men have sworn allegiance not only to you, but to the Emperor's Majesty. They were enlisted in the Emperor's name, and carry the imperial banner."

"Ah!" cried the Elector, "I see you know how it is, Conrad von Burgsdorf, and understand the difficulties of the position in which we find ourselves. Yes, the regiments of the Elector of Brandenburg have given oath to the Emperor, and the Emperor's banners wave above our forts. All my officers serve the Emperor first! Tell me, Burgsdorf, are you yourself not in the Emperor's service? Have you not a regiment in the imperial army, although you are governor of Küstrin, and therefore under my command?"

"That is so," replied Burgsdorf. "I could not refuse the imperial regiment because it was such a lucrative post, and the governorship paid me hardly anything. The emoluments for heading the imperial regiment were more in one year than I would have gained in twenty years from my Brandenburg post. Necessity drove me to it." *

"I know that very well," said the Elector, "and I repeat that the past shall be forgotten if you promise that in future you will be true and loyal to myself alone."

* Burgsdorf's own words. *Vide* History of Prussia, by von Orlich, vol. ii, p. 390.

"Your highness!" shouted Burgsdorf, "I will be faithful to you and your government to the end of my life! I renounce empire and Emperor, and henceforth the Elector of Brandenburg is my sole lord and general! Allow me on the spot to give into your own hand my oath of office, and swear to you eternal fidelity!"

"Here is my hand," said the Elector solemnly. "Swear upon this hand hereafter to become the sword of Brandenburg, to serve me faithfully and zealously, and to have no other Sovereign than myself!"

"In God's name I swear that I will have no other Sovereign, and serve under no other Prince, than yourself alone, the Elector of Brandenburg!" cried Burgsdorf, laying both his hands in that of the Elector and pressing it fervently to his lips.

"And now, having sworn you into my service," said the Elector, in a majestic tone, "now I commission you to return home to Küstrin and to administer the oath to all the officers and men there. But understand, to me alone, not to the Emperor."

"To you alone, not to the Emperor!" cried Burgsdorf, with animation.

"And I further order you to receive no imperial garrison into your fortress, for we have a right to exact this, since it is clearly stipulated in the peace of Prague that each Prince is at liberty to man his fortresses with his own people, which clause gives validity to this assertion of right." *

"Your Electoral Highness!" cried Burgsdorf, "that was spoken like a man! Begin the good work in earnest, and command the Stadtholder without delay to swear in the other governors of your remaining fortresses!" †

"You are of opinion, then, that this is very necessary, and that these gentlemen might refuse to swear allegiance to me alone?"

"Yes, sir, I am strongly of that opinion, and would venture to lay a wager that Colonel von Rochow at Spandow, and

* The Elector's own words. See Droysen, History of Prussian Politics, vol. iii, p. 223.

† Burgsdorf's own words. See *ibid.*, p. 224.

Goldacker and Kracht in Berlin, will not take oath to your Electoral Highness."

"Woe to them if they do it not!" cried the Elector, with flashing eyes. "I shall prove to them that they must bow in obedience to me, and that I recognize no other lord but myself within the limits of my own dominions. Now go back to the Mark, Burgsdorf, and do as I have bidden you. You may also, as would once have been so pleasant to you, go over right often to Berlin. Attend well to all that is going on, for it may be that I shall soon have occasion for you there. Be on your guard, therefore, colonel, and be pretty circumspect in word and deed. Ponder upon the advice given you by the little Electoral Prince once: 'Learn and wait.'"

"Sir, you give me another thrust!" cried Burgsdorf; "but it does me good, and I am glad of it. Yes, I shall learn and wait, for I see plainly the last night of the world has not come yet, and my dearest master will not always have to act so on the defensive as now; when the right time comes, he will strike and prove to all his enemies, even the mightiest of them, that he is more powerful than they. Mark now, mark my words; Schwarzenberg may look out!"

"But meanwhile let Burgsdorf look out! Farewell now, Burgsdorf, you have received my orders. Execute them."

"Now," cried the Elector, after the colonel had left the room—"now, my dear Leuchtmar, you know all my views and plans. But the most weighty, important, and difficult task I have reserved for you."

"I think I know what your highness means," said Leuchtmar, smiling. "Your precautionary measures have been taken in all directions; as early as yesterday your envoys departed laden with most submissive messages of respect for the Emperor. Only in one direction have you done nothing, and that remains for me. I am to go to Sweden, am I not?"

The Elector nodded and smiled. "It is as you say—you are to go to Sweden. A great danger threatens my country. The Swedes are on the frontiers, or rather within my territories, for they hold possession of Pomerania, which is mine. They are on the point of invading the Mark, Banner again

threatens my poor, exhausted lands, and it is said that he has already issued orders for the demolishing of Berlin. Schwarzenberg for that very reason had the suburbs of Berlin and Cologne burned down, thus laying the city open to assault; from Saxony, also, the Swedish general Stallhansch advances upon Brandenburg, and all is in a fair way to encircle the Mark in the flames of war. But, as you know, I have no money and no soldiers, no power and no lands. I can not conduct a war! My single purpose must now be, in the first place, to withdraw my oppressed land and people from these flames of war into lasting repose and a peaceful security, and then to govern them well.* I shall send you to Sweden, therefore, Leuchtmar, to conclude for me a temporary armistice with the Swedes, and also to negotiate the conditions of a peace. I must have peace at any price, for on no terms can I carry on a war. Chancellor Oxenstiern is indeed a proud and overbearing man, who will probably make hard conditions, but we must accommodate ourselves to them, yield gracefully now, and defer our revenge for a later day. Only if he demands Pomerania as the price of peace, you may not yield; we will indeed be yielding, but not suffer ourselves to be humbled. We can grant much, but not allow ourselves to be imposed upon in everything. If Oxenstiern desires money and other material things, promise them, but land and towns you may not give."

"Not a single title to land or town, your highness!" cried Leuchtmar, "for you have said that you would substantiate your titles, and give kernels to the empty shells; therefore the Swede shall not crack a single one of your nuts."

"Not a single one," repeated the Elector, while he smilingly extended his hand to his friend. "And now, one thing more, Leuchtmar. Do you remember the plan about which my great-uncle Gustavus Adolphus spoke to my mother, when he was here on a visit?"

"Yes, indeed," returned Leuchtmar promptly, "I remember it, and think it were time now to carry it into execution. There is one means of uniting Sweden and Brandenburg in the bonds of peace, without reducing Brandenburg to humilia-

* The Elector's own words. See Droysen, vol. iii, p. 223.

tion. Only follow the plan of the great Gustavus Adolphus; you know he destined his daughter Christina for your wife."

"Yes," said the Elector, and a sudden pallor overspread his cheeks—"yes, he meant his daughter to be my wife. Go, Leuchtmar, and woo her, but quite secretly and quietly. As I have already told you, my heart is dead, young Frederick William no longer desires anything for himself, but the young Elector a great deal still, and it is the Elector who offers his hand to Queen Christina for the good of his country. I believe the little, young Queen interests herself somewhat in her cousin Frederick William, at least so my aunt, the widowed Queen, assured me. I shall intrust to you a letter for the young Queen, which you must try to slip into her own hand without Oxenstiern knowing anything about it. Go now, dear Leuchtmar, and prepare all things for your journey. Meanwhile I shall write the letter."

"In one hour, your highness, I shall be ready," said Leuchtmar, withdrawing with a low bow.

The Elector thoughtfully followed him with his eyes. "In one hour he will be ready," he said, "and he goes away to woo for me a woman's heart. Oh, Love and Faith, must you, too, bow to the great laws which govern the world? Must you, too, be laid as sacrifices upon the altar of country? Hush, poor heart and murmur not! Sink down into the sea of forgetfulness, ye days of the past! A new era dawns upon me. I stand before the gates of a great future, and I write above these gates, 'I will be a mighty and distinguished ruler!' That is my future."

IV.—Confirmed in Power.

With triumphant expression of countenance Count Adam von Schwarzenberg walked to and fro in his cabinet. The Chamberlain Werner von Schulenburg had just left him, and the glad tidings which he had brought from the young Elec-

tor had banished all doubts, all cares from the Stadtholder's heart.

"I did him injustice," he said cheerfully to himself. "Frederick William was not my enemy, not my opponent! He was only the son of his father, and he will now also walk in his father's ways. I therefore remain what I am, remain Stadtholder, the lord of the Mark! And," he continued, more softly, "I would have put this amiable Prince out of the way! Who knows whether it would have been for my advantage if he had died and my son stepped into his place! My son is of my blood—that is to say, he is ambitious and thirsts after power and distinction. He would not have left the government in my hands, if he could have wrested it from me, and perhaps I would not have remained Stadtholder in the Mark had it been in his power to displace me!"

The count had thrown himself into a fauteuil, and supported his head on his hand. The triumphant expression had long since faded from his features, which were now grave and lined by care.

"It pleases me not," he murmured, after a long pause—"no, it pleases me not at all that my son associates so constantly with Goldacker, Kracht, and Rochow at Spandow. They are disorderly fellows, who recognize no law or restraint, and find their sole pleasure in tumult and strife. It would seem fine to them if they could embroil father and son, for they would surely fish in the troubled waters, and draw out some advantage for themselves, which is ever their only concern. They exert an evil influence over my son, I know that, and it would be infinitely better for him to go away from here and—— Ha! a good thought! I shall immediately carry it out."

He started up and grasped the large gold bell, which had been recently presented to him by the Emperor. The clear, sonorous tones called a smile to the count's lips.

"Yes, yes," he said, "the old Elector is dead, and I ring the new times in; yet the new era is but a repetition of the old, and the end remains ever the same, although the means by which we attain it differ. I used to whistle, now I ring,

but the object remains identically the same—to summon serviceable spirits to my side.

"They do not come, though," he continued after a long pause, in which he had awaited in vain the appearance of a lackey. "No, these, my serviceable spirits come not; they incline not to the new order of things, and prefer clinging to the old."

He took the little golden whistle, lying on the table beside the bell, and gave a loud, shrill call with it. Immediately the door opened and a lackey appeared.

"Why have you kept me waiting?" asked the count imperiously. "Did you not hear the bell?"

"Yes, your excellency," replied the lackey, with reverential mien, "I heard ringing. It was the beadle, giving notice that two women were to be put in the pillory on the fish market for committing twenty thefts between them!"

"Stupid fool! It was I who rang!" cried the count. "Did I not yesterday notify you through the majordomo that I should no longer call you with a whistle, but with a bell?"

"It is true, your excellency, and I beg your pardon for forgetting it," replied the lackey humbly.

"Mark it for all time to come," commanded the count. "Go now and tell my son, Count John Adolphus, that I wish to speak with him, and request him to come to me."

The lackey bowed obsequiously and left the apartment. He paused behind the closed door, and with defiant, angry countenance, shook his clinched fist.

"You will no longer call us by a whistle," he muttered wrathfully, "and yet you whistle for your parrot and your dogs. But that is quite too good for your servants and lackeys, and they must now listen for that sheep bell. Tinkle and ring for us, will you, as if you were the beadle and we good-for-nothing folks to be put in the pillory? Ah me! every day the rich and high become more haughty, and the poor and lowly must every day put up with more! We had hoped, indeed, that other times would come, and that the young Elector would shove that old tyrant of a Stadtholder aside, and oust him from his dignities and offices. But Count Adam von Schwarzenberg retains his place, and the only change for

us is that he rings for us instead of whistling as of old. We must just submit, and when he rings obey his orders as if he whistled."

With a deep sigh and melancholy air the lackey now walked off to execute his lord's commands, and summon Count John Adolphus to his father. This young gentleman made haste to obey the call.

"My son," cried the Stadtholder, himself opening his cabinet door, "I recognized your step and came to meet you."

"You have something very urgent to say to me then, since you have so anxiously expected me?" asked John Adolphus, pressing his father's hand to his lips.

"Yes, much that is urgent," replied the Stadtholder. "The young Elector's envoy has arrived, and brought me a first missive from him."

"Good news?" asked his son hurriedly.

"Yes, good news. The Elector confirms me in all my offices and dignities. I remain Stadtholder in the Mark, Director of the War Department—in short, what I am, whence follows as a matter of course that the Elector Frederick remains what his father was—my obedient servant. My son, the power has not fallen from my hand, and your heritage remains."

"I assure you, my gracious father, I have but little desire to enter upon this heritage of mine," cried young Count Adolphus, shrugging his shoulders. "May I long remain what I am now, the son of the Stadtholder in the Mark, the coadjutor of the Grand Master of the Order of St. John."

"I thank you, Adolphus, for this kind and friendly wish," said Count Adam, giving his hand to his son. "It proves to me that you love your old father, and that delights me. Truly, man is a wonderful creature, not being able to live for himself alone, but always longing for some sympathetic heart on which to lean. I have at last made the discovery that I have a heart."

"And I," said Count Adolphus, laughing—"I have just discovered that I no longer have a heart."

"Or rather, you are sick at heart, are you not?" inquired

his father quickly. "My son, you have avoided me of late —you have turned from me, you no longer confide in me."

"I have nothing to confide, most revered sir," replied Count Adolphus, smiling. "I lead a merry, harmless life, and care for nothing."

"For nothing?" repeated the count. "Not even for the Princess Charlotte Louise?"

Count Adolphus slightly shuddered, and his cheeks paled a little, but he carelessly shook his head, and continued to smile.

"My son," continued his father, "I ask you to-day, as I did two years ago, on what terms are you with the Princess Charlotte Louise? During all this time you have invariably eluded my efforts to converse on the subject. I indulged you, for I know my prudent, cautious son, and waited for him to give me his confidence voluntarily. Hitherto, however, I have but waited in vain, so that I am compelled to take the initiative, and sue for your confidence. Give it to me, Adolphus, tell me whether you love the Princess Charlotte Louise."

"Wherefore?" asked Count Adolphus. "How would it profit you?"

"Me? Not at all, but perhaps it may profit you to tell me the truth. The lofty hopes we once indulged in have come to naught, destiny has not willed their fruition. We have been disappointed in our hope of seeing George William's daughter become his heiress, and exalt her husband into an Elector of Brandenburg. Frederick William is Elector, he has entered upon his father's estates to their full extent. But the Princess Charlotte Louise is still unmarried, and has remained so because she loves you and is waiting for you."

"She has made me wait," cried the young count, with a sudden outburst of passion. "She kept me standing and waiting two hours before a locked door, and never, while I live, never, shall I forget the shame, the torture, and degradation of those two hours of vain expectation. Oh, father, see what power you have over me! I swore then that no human being should ever hear of the insult put upon me by that haughty Prince's daughter, and yet I am confessing it to you now. Pity me not, say nothing, nothing at all, for each word

but aggravates my pain and makes my heart swell with indignation and grief. Oh, I loved her, trusted her, I dreamed of a proud and brilliant future, which I should owe to her! And she played her part in such masterly style, her countenance wearing a look of such innocence and candor! O father! I loved her, and I, the experienced man of the world, allowed myself to be deceived by that young girl, who knew nothing of the world, and was yet such an accomplished hypocrite! Think not that I was a mere idle coxcomb, arrogantly basing his expectations upon his wishes. No, she deceived me, she disappointed me! You should have seen her at that *fête* which you gave to the Electoral Prince. How tenderly she leaned upon my arm, as we walked through the greenhouse, with what glowing cheeks, with what a blissful smile did she listen to my protestations of love, with what amiable bashfulness did she respond to them! She even anticipated my boldest hopes and desires, and when I ventured to ask for a rendezvous, not only consented to it, but gave me a proof that she would have granted it without waiting for me to seek one. There, in the greenhouse, she pressed a little note into my hand, which stated clearly and distinctly that she appointed ten o'clock of the following evening for a rendezvous with me at the castle. And yet all was falsehood and deceit—all only invented for the purpose of punishing the presumptuous fool who had dared to lift his eyes to the proud Princess! Oh, how she laughed perhaps, and mocked me with her sister, mother, and brother, while I stood below before the locked door and waited, finally being obliged to slink away, burying my rage and despair in my heart! I fancy her spying from a neighboring window, watching me, and enjoying my confusion as I stood there knocking at a bolted door, having at last to go off silent and bowed down. It makes me furious to think of this, and yet continually the idea haunts me, leaving me no rest, until the remembrance of these two dreadful hours becomes absolute torture. O father! why have you wrenched this secret from my heart?—why have you persuaded me to tell you, what I have not even revealed to my father confessor?"

"I am glad, my son, that I have succeeded in opening this

secret," said the count quietly. "I say opening, for like a festering sore it has rankled in your bosom, and believe me, Adolphus, since it has been opened, you will experience relief and your heart will heal. It has befallen many another man to be caught in the snares of a coquette, and to have a few costly illusions dispelled. But consider, my son, each illusion lost is an experience gained, and experience is cheaply bought with the dreams of the heart. Experience, you know, brings knowledge of the world, and knowledge of the world forms the diplomatist and statesman. You are already, my son, no despicable statesman, and you will some day play a great game, even though you are not the Electoral Princess's husband. For the rest I can give you one comforting assurance, and relieve your mind of an oppressive consciousness. In order to do this I have allowed you to vent your rage, and listened with attentive ear to your passionate complaints. My consolation is this: you have never loved the Princess Charlotte Louise —that is to say, never loved her with your heart, but only with your vanity and ambition. It was very flattering to you to be loved by a Princess, and ambition whispered to you that through your wife you might become reigning Elector, if the Electoral Prince were only put out of the way by fate or some other obliging hand. There was surely some prospect of this, and you know how exultingly we both looked forward to such a future. But we made shipwreck of those plans, and now it is too late to build them anew. However, let us not mourn over the past, but forget it. This hour has witnessed your last lament over your dead past. Its knell has been rung, let us both now doom it to oblivion. I have retained one thing in my memory, however, and that is the note which the incautious Princess gave you that evening in the greenhouse. Do you still possess it?"

"Yes, I still possess it, and as often as I look at it my heart is like to burst with indignation and wrath!"

"On the contrary, Adolphus, you ought to rejoice whenever you look at it, for you can turn this little note into a formidable weapon against the Electoral house. With this note you can some day force the young Elector to make you my successor, confirm you in the rank of Grand Master of

the Knights of St. John, or even, if you still wish it, make you the husband of his sister Charlotte Louise. Ah! my son, a note in which the Elector's sister invites you to a rendezvous by night is worth more to you, indeed, than if you could go out against your enemy with an army, for an army might be vanquished, but in this *billet-doux* of the Princess each stroke of her hand becomes a soldier fighting with invincible armor."

"You are right, most gracious father," said Count Adolphus, with a sinister expression of face. "The day may come when I shall march out these soldiers against the faithless Princess and her whole house! I hate her, I hate them all, and my whole heart longs for revenge, and——"

"Your excellency," said a chamberlain, approaching hastily—"your excellency, a courier from Königsberg has just arrived, and is the bearer of this dispatch from the Elector."

The Stadtholder took the proffered packet, and by a hurried sign dismissed the chamberlain.

"A courier from Königsberg," he said, with a slight shaking of the head, as he examined the great sealed envelope which he held in his hand. "A writing from the Electoral Government Office, when Schulenburg was just with me this very day, the bearer of verbal communications! I do not understand it!"

"The best plan would be, most revered father, to open the letter!" cried Count Adolphus briskly. "You will then see what news it contains."

The Stadtholder made no answer, but tore off the cover and drew forth the inner paper. Slowly he unfolded this, and read.

His son had involuntarily advanced a few steps nearer, and watched his father's countenance with the impatience of suspense. He saw him turn pale, his brow darken, and his lips become firmly compressed.

"The letter contains bad news?" he said breathlessly.

"Not merely bad but astonishing news," replied the count, with forced composure. "The Elector here makes several requirements of me, and not directly, but through his private secretary Götz."

"What presumption!" exclaimed his son passionately.

"How can that little Elector dare to forward a writ of chancery to you, the mighty and influential Stadtholder in the Mark, instead of addressing his desires and requests to you privately in his own handwriting?"

"It shows at all events a little negligence and want of formality," replied his father thoughtfully, "although the Elector may certainly plead as his excuse the many claims upon his time. For the same reason he only gave Schulenburg verbal messages for me."

"And may I ask what the Elector demands of your grace? Or is this an indiscretion on my part?"

"No, my son, you shall learn it. In the first place, the Elector requires me to send unopened to him at Königsberg all letters arriving here addressed to him, and not to open and answer them in his name as hitherto. The Elector further desires me to conclude no act of government without having previously called together the privy council. In the third place, the Elector directs me forthwith to require of all the governors and officers of the forts an oath of allegiance to himself. He lastly asks, if I can make it convenient to come to Prussia, that we may confer together, and that he may have the benefit of my aid and advice."

"And what answer will your grace return to these demands?"

"As regards the first requirement, I shall reply that the Elector's will is law, and that all writings shall be henceforth forwarded to him unopened. As to the second demand, I shall represent that it is now simply impossible to gratify, since only a single member of the old privy council is yet alive. As to binding the officers and commandants by oath to their duty," continued the count slowly, "I shall but require a token of their disposition to fulfill existing engagements. And lastly, as the Elector wishes it, I can hardly refuse him my advice; so that I will go to him in Prussia."

"No," cried Count Adolphus impatiently, "no, father, you shall not. You shall not accept this artfully contrived invitation. You dare not go to Prussia. My God, sir, are your usually keen and penetrating eyes so blinded that they can not see what is so very palpable? Do you really not perceive

that the Elector only wants to entice you away, in order to get you in his power, in order noiselessly and quietly to put you out of the way? Ostensibly you are to go to Königsberg to advise the young, inexperienced Elector. That is the pretext, the sand which they would scatter in the eyes of yourself, your friends, the Emperor, yea, all Germany, so that no one can see what is going on, or by any possibility guess what will happen. You may set out for Königsberg, but you will never get there; you will meet with an accident on the way —either your carriage will be overset and you fatally injured, or robbers fall upon you in the woods and murder you. However it may be, only as a dead man will you arrive at Königsberg, and the Elector will have nothing further to do than to decree your magnificent obsequies!"

"Ah, my son!" cried the Stadtholder, smiling, "you go too far. Never will the Elector resort to such expedients. He is too pious and good a Christian for that!"

"Father, are not you, too, a good, pious Christian, and yet—— Believe me, the Elector has forgotten nothing. He remembers the man found under his bed once, with a murderous weapon in his hand and much gold in his pocket. He remembers the sickness which so suddenly seized him two years ago at the banquet which you had prepared for him. *Then* you invited him, *now* he invites you, and if sickness seizes you, you will probably not have the good fortune to recover as he did."

"That is true; my God! he may be right," muttered the count, turning pale. "It may be that they suspect me; they may have told him I meant to poison him at that banquet. I have proofs of it which make it seem probable, and that woman—— Hush, hush! nothing of that—that has no place here! But I believe myself that you are right, and will therefore ignore the Elector's invitation."

"God be praised, father, that you have taken this resolution!" cried the young count joyfully. "Now at last the crisis is upon us—open enmity and a rupture, regardless of consequences! Waver and hesitate no more. The Elector would ruin you; you must ruin him. Nay, look not so amazed and shocked, father! I have long foreseen this moment, and

have prepared everything for meeting the emergency with dignity. As soon as the first news of the Elector George William's death reached here, I gathered about me my friends and yours, and held a long consultation with them, which satisfied me of their fidelity and devotion. Oh, most gracious sir, you have indeed no reason to bewail your lot, for you have many and reliable friends, who are ready for your sake to confront the most imminent dangers, to undertake what is most difficult and hazardous! All of our friends were convinced with me that the Electoral Prince is your implacable enemy, and that he only watches for an opportunity to accomplish your ruin. In spite of his few years, however, he is much too wise and cautious a man to attempt to act against you with open, swift determination. He knows the Emperor loves you, and that he would regard each act of enmity against you as directed against himself. Therefore he would quietly remove and undo you. Here, in the midst of your faithful friends, surrounded by soldiers and officers who have taken an oath of fidelity to you and the Emperor, in the midst of your adherents and retainers, the Elector would not dare to arrest and accuse you. He begins much more prudently, much more circumspectly! In the first place, you are to swear the governors and officers into the Elector's service. That is to say, in other words, they are no longer to recognize the Emperor as lord paramount or you as the Elector's representative, but their oath is to bind them to the Elector alone, and only on his will are they to be dependent. After having accomplished all this, you are to proceed to Prussia, where no one defends you, where your friends can not rally around you, where you will vanish, uncared for and unwept. No, my lord and father, you must not go to Prussia, or if you do, not until you have assembled around you your loyal subjects, when, at the head of your regiments, you go forth to meet the Elector as his powerful and determined foe, not as his servant."

"What do you say, my son?" asked the Stadtholder, shocked.

"I say, father, that your friends and I have been secretly active, that we have prepared to defend you in case the Elector threatens you. Throughout the whole Mark your friends

are ready to make open opposition to the Elector, and firmly determined to protect you and their own rights and privileges sword in hand. Only carry out Frederick William's order, summon the commandants of the forts here to Berlin, and demand of them their oath of allegiance to the Elector. This they will refuse. All, with the exception of Burgsdorf of Küstrin and Trotha of Peitz, will declare that they have already given in their oath to the Emperor, and can not conscientiously take any other. The colonels of the regiments will say the same, especially Goldacker, the boldest, bravest of them all. They will keep faith with the Emperor, and therefore the Elector of Brandenburg is not their commander in chief. *You*, who administered the imperial oath, they will obey in the Emperor's name, they will follow whithersoever *you* lead."

"But whither can I lead them?" asked the Stadtholder.

"To battle against the little Elector of Brandenburg, who would revolt against his lord the Emperor; to battle against the heretical vassal of the Emperor, who threatens the German Empire and the Church, who would break loose from Emperor and empire, who threatens all creeds, making every effort to strengthen and aggrandize the reformed party. Oh, believe me, not merely good Catholics, but the Evangelical and Lutheran sects, will obey this call, and burn with enmity and wrath against the rash little Elector. We have spread our net, and its meshes are entangling him, even there in Prussia, where he thinks himself quite safe and secure. True friends and trusty messengers have been sent by Goldacker and myself to Prussia, to concert measures there with your adherents, and to rouse them to strong, energetic action. Sebastian von Waldow, superintendent of the palace and captain of Ruppin, assembles your friends together in perfect secrecy, and I daily expect from him exact accounts as to the success of his operations. In Königsberg itself we now have a powerful and efficient friend, who co-operates with us and is like-minded with ourselves. It is the ambassador whom the Emperor has sent to condole with the Elector. He is my best, most confidential friend, Count von Martinitz. He is acquainted with all my plans, he is the confidant of all my hopes and views, and will second them with all his might.

This ambitious, heretical little Elector shall not rise, shall not arrive at power and distinction! That is not only the view the Emperor takes of it, but all German princes. The Elector of Brandenburg is a source of terror and embarrassment to them all. He threatens Saxony, he threatens Brunswick and Hesse; of all he claims land and property now in their possession. He has no friends, adherents, nor allies, this little Elector Frederick William. Holland will not side with him, because it will not relinquish Julich and Cleves, Sweden contends with him for Pomerania, and Poland about the investiture. He has only enemies and accusers! If, then, we attack him, he is lost! No hand will be lifted in his defense, no arm outstretched to save him. The Emperor will grant us his support and countenance, and all German princes will secretly rejoice that so dangerous a rival has been happily removed. O father! you see I have not abandoned hope of becoming some day Elector of Brandenburg! Only, I shall not be indebted for it to the Princess Charlotte Louise, but to you. I shall inherit the dignity as my father's son! And this shall be my revenge upon the faithless, treacherous Princess! I will ruin her and her whole house; I will put my father in her brother's place; I will one day enter as master the palace before whose closed portals they once insolently kept me two hours waiting. I swore that night to be revenged for that insult, and now the moment has come. Father, the fruit of revenge is ripe, and you must pluck it!"

"Yes, that I will," cried the Stadtholder, with animation. "Oh, my son, a great, immeasurable joy fills my soul at this hour; and, first of all, let me beg your pardon for having entertained a horrible suspicion with regard to you which has lately forced itself upon me. I mistrusted you, seeing your activity, your strange confidential transactions with the commandants and officers; I felt that you were on the eve of some great undertaking, and suspected that in you I had a rival, and that you wished to supplant me! Forgive me, my son, forgive me in consideration of the misery my suspicions caused me!"

"I have nothing to forgive, father," said Count Adolphus coldly. "It is so natural for those incapable of love to sup-

pose that others are only moved by selfish ends! You, father, love nothing on earth but your own ambition and fame, and so fancied that it was the same with me, and that ambition could make the son a traitor to his own father!"

"My Adolphus!" cried the Stadtholder, "I have already told you, and repeat again, that I feel I have a heart. I felt it in the pain which I experienced when I doubted you; I feel it now in the rapture which thrills me in beholding you act so boldly and courageously in behalf of your father. Give me your hand, Adolphus, and—if you do not disdain such a thing—embrace me, and kiss your old father."

He held out his arms, and his son threw himself on his breast and imprinted a long, fervent kiss upon his lips. Long did Count Schwarzenberg clasp him to his heart, then took the young man's head between both his hands and looked at him with loving, tender glances. Finally, with a singular expression of embarrassment, he bent down and kissed his eyes.

"My son," he said softly and quickly, "I love you. Yours are the first eyes that I have ever kissed, and this kiss of your father's unpolluted lips should be to you a life-long blessing. And now to work, now for action, and bold adventurous deeds! Oh, of late how weak and worn out I have felt myself to be, and longed to withdraw into solitude and retirement, to rest from all labor! I believed it was old age creeping upon me, and by its abominable touch unnerving my arm and crippling my activity. But now I feel that it was only secret grief about you which thus enfeebled me and robbed my arm of vigor. Now I am quite well again and strong; now I will dare everything that you have so prudently and wisely planned. Yes, yes, once more I am Schwarzenberg, the Stadtholder in the Mark, and I shall not allow myself to be imposed upon; I shall do battle with this little Frederick William, who ventures to defy and threaten me. He opposes the Emperor, he would be an independent Sovereign while he is only the Emperor's vassal. For this he shall be punished. It will not be our fault if this hurls him from his little throne, and how could we be blamed, should the Emperor bestow the margraviate of Brandenburg upon Prince Schwarzenberg, as he did the mar-

graviate of Jägerndorf upon Prince Lobkowitz? To work, my son, to work! Oh, now again my eyes see clearly—now again my head conceives fixed and energetic thoughts. My son, we two combined will surely be equal to the execution of our exalted schemes. We two combined will ruin the Elector."

"And put you in his place," cried the young count.

"I must go before, that you may be my successor, and that our house stand firm and strong, and not be inferior to that of Lobkowitz or Fürstenberg. Already it is clearly defined in my mind what we shall have to do. In the first place, we must render the Elector odious to all parties, making it evident to each that he is a dangerous foe to all, who would enrich himself at his neighbors' expense, and would arrive at honor and power by weakening and degrading others. We have only to say to the Emperor that he is his opponent, and seeks to release his officers from the oath they have taken. Ferdinand is passionate and jealous of his prerogatives, and will crush his rebellious vassal. To the Lutherans and their favorers we will have it whispered by our friends that the Elector, as a rigid Calvinist, threatens their faith, and proposes to restrict the privileges of their country churches and to deprive of their offices all those who will not confess the Calvinistic creed. The Lutherans are a hard-headed and fanatical sect. He who menaces their faith is their arch-enemy, and they will be ready to fight against him with fire and sword. The soldiers, you know, are always ready to follow him who pays them best, and as regards their officers, thanks to you, my son, we are sure of them. Let us now adopt a fixed plan for hastening the crisis."

"I am only waiting for the return of the messenger whom I sent to Sebastian von Waldow. He will bring us reliable information as to the progress of organization among your adherents in Prussia, for Waldow has gone himself to Königsberg to hold a consultation with Count Martinitz, and to concert with our loyal friends a fixed plan of operations."

"We shall be obliged to go very slowly and cautiously to work," said Count Adam thoughtfully. "We must first secure ourselves on all sides, and be sure of the result before we

venture to assume the offensive. The most important thing now is to assure ourselves of the Emperor's favor and approval. You, my son, must repair forthwith to Regensburg, where the Emperor is at present. You will inform him that I have obtained orders from the Elector to release the troops from their oath to the Emperor, and to swear them into the Elector's service alone. You will say to his Majesty that I have declined to yield to this order, and in the oath administered to the officers have made their allegiance to the Elector quite secondary to their obligations to himself. You will further notify the Emperor that the soldiers' pay has been in arrears for a month, because all our coffers are empty. Therefore ask, in my name, if it would not perhaps be advisable, if we come to extremities, to take the Brandenburg troops into the Emperor's pay, to give them rations in the Emperor's name, and renew their oath to his Imperial Majesty. To effect this, we have only to stimulate a little the discontent of the troops. They are already tolerably desperate because they have not received their wages. If the Elector does not speedily pay off the troops, the desperation will reach its height, and a revolt break forth spontaneously."

"Thence it follows, most gracious sir, that they will become as wax to be molded at your will."

"You are right, my son; we must manage to retain authority over friend and foe. The troops here are a wild, lawless horde, knowing little of discipline and order, and bearing much closer resemblance to a robber band than a princely army. We must aim at having disciplined troops at hand, such as are accustomed to obedience, and to this end must introduce imperial troops into the Mark. Nothing further is necessary for this than to begin hostilities against the Swedes with renewed activity, drawing them down upon Berlin. It will then seem quite natural, considering the weakness of the forces here, to invite the aid of the Emperor and his troops in defending Berlin and protecting ourselves against the Swedes, but in truth to help us in this great movement against the seditious Elector, who would revolt against Emperor and empire.

"I commission you, my son, to unravel this whole scheme

to the Emperor, and to petition him for his countenance. For, without the imperial approbation and without an assurance of success, we dare not proceed further in this dangerous undertaking. We must have some security, too, that the Emperor's Majesty will proportionately reward us if we gain the Mark for him, and rid him of that mutinous, heretical Elector."

"I shall above all things seek to come to an understanding with Father Silvio, and impress upon the Emperor's pious, zealous father confessor the extent of glory and blessing to be acquired in behalf of the Church and holy faith by wresting the Mark out of the hands of a heretic, and bestowing it upon a believing, true Catholic, such as the Stadtholder in the Mark. The father has the Emperor's ear, and, I believe, is favorably disposed toward me. I shall use every means for enlisting his favor, and it would be well to have some funds at my disposal for this purpose. Father Silvio, noble and pious though he be, loves money, and is not inaccessible to jewels and valuable gifts. He has in his apartments at Vienna costly collections of precious stones and rare gold and silver plate, and it affords him high gratification to add a few valuable pieces to them."

"We will take care of that," said Count Adam, smiling. "Choose out of our casket of gems a few things worthy the pious father's acceptance, and for money you can draw upon the bankers Fugger of Nuremberg. I recently deposited with them considerable sums, in case of emergency. They are safer there than here in this starved-out Mark, among the desperadoes of Berlin and Cologne, who have no affection for me, and perhaps some day may take it into their heads to demand relief from me for their poverty and want, and plunder me to enrich themselves. Among such a gaunt, hungry populace we must be prepared for everything, and it is wise to be insured against mishaps. In these present evil days, however, nothing but money can raise an army, and only he who has money can aspire to being a general."

"The little Elector of Brandenburg has no money!" cried Count Adolphus, "for which God be praised! He, therefore, can be no general. His troops and his land belong to us, and,

like the Margrave of Jägerndorf and the Elector of the Palatinate, the deposed Elector of Brandenburg may soon be a wanderer in foreign lands, exposing his humiliation to the whole German Empire. Nowhere will he find compassion, nowhere sympathy, for he is a dangerous foe to all, and all will profit by his fall. Dear, honored father, let me depart this very hour for Regensburg, in order to obtain the Emperor's approval of our weighty plans, and to return to you the earlier with plenipotentiary powers."

"You are right, Adolphus, haste makes speed, and we must strike while the iron is hot. Set off, my son, this very hour if you choose. It will not be necessary for me to write to the Emperor by you. You know perfectly how to interpret my thoughts, and your spoken word is better than my written one. God speed you, then, my son, I shall expect daily dispatches from you, acquainting me with the progress of your negotiations."

"I shall write, father, and make use of the ciphers agreed upon between us. You have preserved the key, have you not?"

"I have preserved it in my head," replied the count, pointing to his forehead. "Important secrets should never be committed to paper, and I say with Charles V, 'If one carries a great secret in his head, he should burn his very nightcap, that it may not betray him.' Truly may it be said of us two that we carry an important secret in our heads. Instead of a nightcap I have burned the cipher key, that it may not one day betray us!"

"But the great secret will one day surprise the world," cried Count Adolphus joyfully; "its trumpet peals will one day startle the whole of Germany. From the palace balcony here in Berlin shall its triumphant flourishes ring forth. The people in the streets will hear them in astonishment, and to me they will sound as the rejoicing songs of the heavenly hosts, and enraptured I shall look up to my father, standing there majestic in the pomp of his princely power. If I may then fall at your feet, all the ambitious dreams and aspirations of my heart will be fulfilled, and all within me will rejoice and shout, 'Health and blessings upon Prince Schwarz-

enberg, Margrave of Brandenburg!' Farewell now, dear father! I hurry away, the earlier to return to you!"

V.—The Catastrophe.

Their plans matured, and every day approached nearer to completion, while with firm hand Count Adam Schwarzenberg held the reins which guided the great machinery of insurrection. He had sent Colonel Goldacker with his regiment to Mecklenburg to draw out the Swedes, and to provoke them to advance upon the Mark. The Swedes took up the gauntlet thrown down to them, and, while they were opposed to Goldacker in Mecklenburg, other Swedish regiments marched from Lausitz against Berlin. This was exactly what the Stadtholder wished, and once more the devoted Mark saw the flames of war burst forth, in order that Schwarzenberg might have an excuse for summoning Saxon troops to his aid. To-day these troops had reached Berlin, and the Stadtholder wished to celebrate their arrival by a sumptuous *fête* in his palace. To this entertainment he had bidden Colonel Goldacker from Mecklenburg; the commandants of Spandow and Berlin, with their officers, were also invited, and already, in the early morning, they were preparing the table in the great hall for the magnificent collation to be served at noon.

Meanwhile lamentation and mourning reigned in the cities of Berlin and Cologne, while life went so merrily in the Schwarzenberg palace. The wild hordes of soldiers made the streets unsafe even in the daytime. Drunken they roved through the city, with the greatest tumult and uproar; they broke into the houses of peaceful citizens to plunder and rob, and wherever anything was refused them, they committed the most wanton acts, laughing and singing over the tortures they inflicted. In vain had the burghers applied to the officers of these ungovernable outlaws and besought them to restrain the soldiery from outrages, to confine them to their quarters, and to punish them for their thefts and robberies. The officers de-

clared that there was no means of enforcing so rigid a discipline, and that in times of war some allowance should be made for soldiers who with their own bodies protected the burghers from their foes.

But the poor, tormented burghers did not want war; they wanted peace! Peace at any price. The States, too, who held their session in Berlin, wanted peace, and to this end had sent out a deputation from their midst to the Elector at Königsberg to implore him to pity their distress and to command the Stadtholder in the Mark to abstain from hostilities against the Swedes.

The same suit the citizens desired to present to the Stadtholder, and to-day, while preparations were in progress for a military entertainment in the Schwarzenberg palace, a solemn deputation of the magistracy and citizenship repaired to the same spot to lay before the Stadtholder their wishes and entreaties. Count Schwarzenberg kept them waiting a long while in his antechamber, and when he finally made his appearance his countenance was proud and haughty, and his eyes shot angry glances upon the poor representatives of the burghers, who stood with deprecating humility before him.

"What would you have of me, sirs?" he cried, in a rough voice. "What have you to say to me?"

"Most gracious sir," replied the burgomaster of Berlin, "we come to entreat the aid and assistance of your excellency in behalf of our afflicted cities. We are exhausted, hungry, plundered, driven to despair. We can no longer bear the frightful burden of war. Have compassion upon our affliction; make peace with the Swede, that he may not advance upon Berlin, that we may not be forced to appeal to foreigners for our defense."

"Make peace!" cried the burghers, stretching out their hands imploringly toward the Stadtholder, their eyes filled with tears. "O sir! we have borne sorrow and wretchedness for so many long, bitter years! Our hearts are crushed and desperate! Our souls are faint! Make peace, that we may see some end to our trials! We have no nourishment, no money, not even a shelter for our heads. The Swedes plundered us: the Imperialists took from us what the Swedes left;

and now our own soldiers drive us out of our bare and empty dwellings, make sport of our calamities, mock the burghers, insult our wives and daughters, and quarter themselves in our houses, while we wander homeless about the streets, not even being able to procure shelter in our churches because the cavalry have taken possession of these with their horses, and converted the temples of God into filthy barracks! Make peace, Sir Stadtholder, make peace!"

"I have not power to do so," replied Count Schwarzenberg haughtily, "neither the power nor the will! The Swede is the enemy of our country, and we must resist him with all the means at our command. Cease your howling and shrieking, for it will be but in vain. War is upon us, and we can not as cowards retreat before it. Shame upon you for your pusillanimity and cowardice, since your men are still capable of bearing arms!"

"Sir, our men have no more strength for fighting. Our hands are too weak to hold a weapon."

"Oh, you will be forced to handle them!" cried Schwarzenberg, laughing scornfully. "When your houses are on fire, and you see your wives and children dragged off by soldiers, then these cowards will be turned into valiant warriors, who can at least defend their lives and the honor of their families! I tell you, though, it will come to that. Extremity is before you, and calls for terrible resolutions." *

The burghers broke into loud lamentations, a few threw themselves on their knees, others wept and wailed, while the lords of the magistracy approached nearer to the count in order to make confidential representations of the utter hopelessness and despondency of the two unhappy cities of Berlin and Cologne.

Schwarzenberg, however, turned away from these representations with stern composure. "I have not peace but war in hand," he said. "Why do you apply to me now when you think, nevertheless, that you can receive no good save from the Elector himself, who is your guardian angel, while I am the destroying one. Wait and see what news the deputation

* Schwarzenberg's own words. See Droysen, History of Prussian Politics.

of the States will bring you from Königsberg. You besought the States in your time of trouble to appeal to the Elector himself. Well, be patient and await their return. However, I can tell you beforehand that they will bring you a refusal, for the Elector wishes war, and has given me orders to that effect. He has confirmed me in all my offices and dignities. He has most condescendingly assured me of his unlimited confidence, and empowered me to act according to my own unbiased judgment, and to guide the reins of government as I shall choose. I hold them tight, and shall not be turned out of my way by your whining and complaining. War is upon us, and should I have to lay Berlin in ashes to avoid giving a shelter and asylum to the Swedes, it shall be done, rather than conclude peace with them, yield to their degrading conditions, and give up Pomerania to them! I therefore advise you to be on good terms with the soldiers, to receive them kindly into your houses, to entertain them well——"

"Sir," interrupted the first burgomaster, with a bitter cry of distress—"sir, we have nothing with which we could entertain them, we——"

"Silence!" called out the Stadtholder, in a thundering voice—"silence! I have heard you out, and it is my turn now to speak, and yours to listen silently. Go and take your measures accordingly, and act as becomes obedient subjects."

He turned upon his heel and with proud bearing re-entered his cabinet, while the burghers sorrowfully slunk away, to spread throughout all Berlin the dreadful news that all their entreaties had been in vain, and that the war was to be prolonged.

"Yes, the war is to be prolonged," repeated Count Schwarzenberg, when he again found himself alone in his cabinet. "We approach the *dénouement*, and if I could only get decisive tidings from my son, I would hurry on a crisis and begin open war. He keeps me waiting for such tidings a very long while," continued the count, dropping into the armchair in front of his writing table. "He has only written once to me from Regensburg, and then he could only inform me that he had commenced operations, and—— Ah!" he interrupted himself, as his glance fell upon his table, "there are papers

and dispatches, which must have come in my absence. Perhaps there is among them a letter from my son."

He hastily snatched up the letters and examined one after another. No, there was no letter from his son, only official documents from the Elector's cabinet.

He opened the first of these, and a shudder ran through his whole frame as he read. In this paper the Elector commanded the Stadtholder in the Mark to send back to him the blank charters, intrusted to him by the Elector George William on his departure for Königsberg; he must, moreover, render a distinct and exact account of the manner in which he had disposed of the charters no longer in existence. *He*, Schwarzenberg, the mighty Stadtholder in the Mark, the Grand Master of the Knights of St. John, the Director of the War Department—*he*, to be called to account as a servant by his master! He was expected to answer for what he had done in the plenitude of his power, and—worse than that—he must suffer that power to be limited! He would do nothing of the sort; he would not give up the blank charters not yet appropriated and send them back to the Elector!

That was to curtail the privileges of his high position, to dethrone him, and, after having been an absolute master, to make him a dependent servant! These blank charters had been the princely prerogative of the Stadtholder, the scepter with which he ruled! These papers, on which nothing was written, but at the lower corner of which stood the Elector's sign manual—these papers had made him absolute monarch of the Mark. In free plenitude of power, with unfettered will, had he filled up the vacant sheets, bestowing by their means honors and benefits, inflicting punishments, imposing taxes, and the Elector's signature had legalized his decrees, and imparted the force of law to his will.*

And these blank charters, before which his enemies trembled, which had struck his partisans and friends as a precious attribute of his power—these blank charters he was now called upon to resign!

"I shall not do it," he exclaimed, in a loud, determined voice—"no, I shall not do it! I shall not be such a fool as

* See von Orlich, History of Prussia, vol. i, p. 60.

to lessen my own power. No; the blank charters are mine, I shall know how to hold them fast!"

He threw the rescript aside and seized another letter. Again from the Elector's cabinet—again a command from him to the Stadtholder in the Mark!

He broke open the seal, unfolded the paper with trembling hands, and again shuddered as he read; and a momentary pallor overspread his cheeks. This writing contained the Elector's orders to suspend hostilities, and to refrain from any attack upon the Swedes and the places occupied by them, and most rigidly to confine himself to the defensive until an abiding peace could be concluded with Sweden.*

"You assail me, little Elector!" he said, with smothered, threatening voice. "You bring out your reserves against me, and would cause the proud edifice of my power to crumble away stone by stone! You fear lest if the great Colossus falls at once it might crush you, and therefore you would destroy it piecemeal, a little at a time! You shall not succeed, though, little Elector; the Colossus will rear its head on high, and you alone will fall!"

At this moment loud, angry and excited voices made themselves heard from the antechamber, and a lackey tore open the door.

"Your excellency, the Commandants von Rochow, von Kracht, and Colonel von Goldacker request an audience."

But the three gentlemen did not wait for the granting of this audience. With unseemly haste they rushed into the cabinet, unceremoniously thrust out the lackey, and closed the door behind him.

"Most gracious sir, do you know it?" screamed Rochow, the commandant of Spandow.

"Do you know, your excellency, what things are going on?" growled Kracht, the commandant of Berlin.

"Have you learned what bold steps the Elector is taking?" thundered Colonel Goldacker, shaking his fist in a most menacing way.

"I know nothing, gentlemen, have heard nothing! Speak, tell me what has happened!"

* See Droysen, History of Prussian Politics, vol. iii, p. 223.

"It has happened that the Elector has sent commissioners to all our fortresses!" cried Herr von Rochow. "Two hours ago such a cursed fellow came to me at Spandow, and when he had delivered me his message I left the fool standing there without any answer, threw myself on my horse, and galloped off to confer with your excellency."

"And such a confounded popinjay has been with me, too!" growled Herr von Kracht. "He also imparted to me his Electoral message—command, the fellow called it. I did just like Commandant von Rochow, left him standing while I hurried off to your excellency."

"An Electoral mandate reached me also!" cried Colonel Goldacker, laughing. "I simply showed the jackanapes the door, laughed him to scorn, and am come to get my orders from your excellency!"

"But, gentlemen, with all this I know nothing and can not find out what has happened. Sir Commandant von Rochow, inform me. What is the matter?"

"The matter is, your excellency," said Herr von Rochow, gnashing his teeth, "that a commissioner from the Elector has come to me with his master's orders, to require an oath of allegiance to the Elector from myself and the whole garrison."

"A like order has the Elector's deputy handed to me!" cried the commandant of Berlin; "the fellow wanted to swear me and my men into the Elector's service."

"I, too, must give such an oath to the commissioner!" screamed Goldacker, "and my troops as well. What do you say to that, Sir Stadtholder in the Mark?"

Just now, however, the Stadtholder said nothing. He turned pale and tottered backward, until his hand rested upon a chair into which he sank. His head swam, a sudden dizziness seized him, and he was obliged to put his hand over his eyes, for everything was turning and whirling in a circle around him. In the vehemence of their own excitement the three gentlemen hardly observed this, and the count, with the energy of his strong will, speedily recovered his composure and presence of mind.

"Your excellency!" cried Commandant von Kracht, "do

you not agree with us? Do you not find the Elector intolerably assuming?"

"I was silent because I was reflecting, gentlemen," said the count, drawing a deep breath. "This appearance of the commissioner empowered to administer to you your oaths of office is a challenge, thrown down to me by the Elector, for I am Director of the War Department, and to me alone should that duty have been committed of again binding the troops in the Mark to him by oath. He insults me, and thereby insults the Emperor, for you all know that the Emperor is your commander in chief, and that you dare never break the oath to the Emperor, which I took from you after the conclusion of the peace of Prague. You swore to do your duty for Emperor and Elector, and for this reason, on the recent accession of the present Elector, I only required the colonels to give me their hands in token of their obligations already assumed, for an oath is an oath, and you can not swear to serve one to-day and another to-morrow."

"We can not and will not, either," shouted Colonel Goldacker furiously. "I have given my word to the Emperor. I remain true to the Emperor, and the Emperor will protect us against the insolence of the little Elector."

"Yes, the Emperor will protect us," cried Colonel von Rochow. "I shall take no new oath, for I have sworn to the Emperor, and not until the Emperor has released me from the oath, and I have made a new agreement with the Elector, can I swear to him. Until that time the oath which I have taken to the Emperor remains binding." *

"I, too, have sworn to serve the Emperor, and shall abide by my oath," said the commandant of Berlin, as if weighing each word. "No one has a right to command here but the Emperor and the Stadtholder in the Mark, whom the Elector himself appointed. What that vagabond of a commissioner says is nothing to the purpose—it signifies nothing to us."

"No, it signifies nothing to us," repeated the other gentlemen. "From you alone, Sir Stadtholder, can we receive orders, for you are Director of the Council of War, the representative of the Emperor and Elector. To you alone

* Rochow's own words. See Droysen, vol. iii, p. 224.

we belong. Give us your orders; we are here to receive them!"

"Gentlemen," said the Stadtholder, pointing with his finger to a sealed packet, lying on the writing table before him —"gentlemen, you interrupted me by your entrance in the perusal of important dispatches, which had just arrived for me from the Elector's cabinet. See, there lies an unopened writing with the Electoral seal. Allow me to read it, for it contains the Elector's commands, which may harmonize with those of his accredited commissioner, or at least enter into particulars with regard to them."

The three officers bowed and reverentially retreated a few steps; but their eyes rested with intense interest upon the count, who now broke the seal and unfolded the paper. A deep silence followed. The piercing glances of the three warriors rested on the count's countenance, which maintained steadfastly its grave, serious expression. But now a scornful laugh burst from him, and for a moment an expression of wild joy illuminated his features. He rose, and with the paper in his hand approached the soldiers. "Gentlemen," he said quietly, "I have a piece of news to communicate to you, which I fear will incommode you and your men a little, and is not calculated to heighten the love of the military for their chief. The Elector commands me, until further notice, to put the troops upon summer allowance, and the payment now in arrears is regarded as coming under the same regulation. I beg you will inform your troops of this."

"That is shameful! That is contemptible! That will put the soldiers in a perfect fury!" screamed the three officers together.

"I do not mean to tell my men!" exclaimed Herr von Rochow—"no, I shall not tell them, for the fellows would be frantic, and in their desperation might commit shameful acts!"

"I shall tell my men on the spot!" grumbled Herr von Kracht. "I shall tell them on purpose to make them desperate, to make them rave! As far as I am concerned, they are welcome to vent their spleen upon all Berlin, upon the whole region round about. Let them go around, plundering and lay-

ing the country under contribution; they are justified in doing so, for the fellows can not subsist in winter on summer allowance, and therefore must rob and plunder."

"I shall tell my soldiers directly, too," shouted Herr von Goldacker. "Not but that it will give rise to a pretty tale of murder, a devilish scandal. There will result a military outbreak, and the burghers of Berlin and Cologne may look to themselves; but the Elector has so willed it—the Elector excites us as well as our subordinates to open insurrection. Let him work his will now; it will only convince him that we are not to be ruled by scraps of paper and decrees scribbled by feather-headed clerks, and that he is not the irresistible lord, to whose piping we dance. The little Elector shall be made to know that the Emperor alone is our supreme officer, to him we have sworn fealty, and to him we cling despite the Elector and all his deputies. I am going on the spot to give my commissioner his dismissal—to tell him that I shall not swear, and then to carry to my soldiers the news of their having been put upon summer allowance!"

"I will go with you," cried Herr von Kracht. "I will also put my commissioner out of the door, and convey the glad tidings to the garrison of Berlin."

"And I," said Herr von Rochow, "will forthwith dispatch a courier to Spandow, to tell my lieutenant that he must send the commissioner out of the fort, and tell the garrison that they are put on summer allowance. It will stir up a fine hub-bub, I am sure of that."

"I, too, believe that the end will not be perfect peace," said the Stadtholder, smiling. "Let the Elector learn that governing is not such an easy matter as he supposes, but that a man may know a good deal, and yet be an unskillful ruler. Go then, gentlemen, issue your orders, but forget not that in an hour our entertainment begins, and that we must not allow our feast to be disturbed by such little follies of the new *régime*."

"No, we will not allow ourselves to be disturbed!" cried Herr von Rochow. "In one hour expect us here again, and you shall see, most gracious sir, that we have brought with us our cheerfulness, our fine appetites, and our thirst."

"Yes, yes, your excellency, guard well your keys and bottles; we shall take the field against them."

"Do so, gentlemen," said the count. "But go now, to return the sooner."

He nodded kindly to the officers and followed them with his eyes until the door closed behind them. Then the composure of his features, the smile on his lip, vanished, and his whole being seemed to express agitation and bitterness of wrath.

"He will insist upon war," he said fiercely. "He smiles upon and strokes me with one hand, while with the other he stabs me, inflicting wound upon wound. Yes, yes, stone by stone he would crumble to dust the tower of my strength, and thinks to crush me to atoms, supposing that I will voluntarily bend to avoid being bent by him. Oh, you are mistaken, little Elector; I am not afraid of you, I shall not bend before you! The Emperor alone I serve, to him alone I am subject. But to me the Emperor is a gracious master. He will ruin you and exalt me; he will protect me against your arrogance. To me belongs the future, presumptuous young Prince! who would rule here, where I have held undisputed sway for twenty years. To me alone belongs the Mark, and I shall hold it for my lord and Emperor! The crisis has come, and finds me prepared and resolute. The troops will revolt, and then shall I step out among them, appease them in the Emperor's name, with lavish hand scatter money among them, and again bind them by oath to the Emperor! Oh, my heart leaps for joy, for the hour of action has come. Only one thing I lack. I would just like to have certain news from my son, to be sure that the Emperor approves of my plan, that he will lift me up where the Elector would cast me down. But this, too, will come, this wish will also be gratified. For I am a son of good fortune, and all goes in accordance with my wishes! Away then with all sad and gloomy thoughts! I would present a cheerful countenance to my guests—I would appear before them in the full splendor of my glory!"

He repaired to his dressing room, where his valets arrayed him in the magnificent habit of a Grand Master of the Knights of St. John, and upon his breast shone the cross of the order

set with sparkling brilliants. Having completed his toilet, he went to the great mirror and, casting a cursory glance therein, said to himself with some satisfaction that his person was still stately and distinguished, well suited to a reigning prince and fitted for wearing a crown! This thought lighted up his countenance with joyful pride, and with high head he returned to his cabinet. Chamberlain von Lehndorf entered, to inform his most noble master that the guests were already assembled in the great reception room, and longingly awaited his appearance. The chamberlain handed the count his ermine-tipped velvet cap, with its long white ostrich plumes, and then flew before to open for him the doors leading to the small antechamber, where were assembled all the officers of the count's household, waiting to follow their master into the hall.

Lehndorf stood at the door of the antechamber, and the Stadtholder smiled upon him as he passed.

"No letters and dispatches from my son at Regensburg, Lehndorf?"

"None, most gracious sir."

"If a courier comes, let me know of it without delay," continued the count, moving forward. "Anything else new, Lehndorf?"

"Nothing new, your excellency."

"What noise was that just now in the antechamber, while the commandants were in my cabinet?"

"Most gracious sir, an insolent soldier—one of those Saxons who marched in yesterday—forced himself into the antechamber, and with real importunity begged to speak to your excellency."

"Why did you not bid him wait until the gentlemen had gone, and then announce him?"

"He would not consent to wait by any means, and with brazen face demanded to see your excellency on the spot. The fellow was drunk, it was plain to see, and in his intoxication kept crying out that he must talk with your excellency about an important secret; if you would not admit him directly, he would go to Prussia and tell your secret to the Elector, which would bring your honor to the scaffold. It was positively

ridiculous to hear the fellow talk, and the lackeys, instead of getting angry, laughed outright at him, which only enraged him the more; he worked his arms and legs like a jumping jack and made faces like a nut-cracker. However, when he again presumed to abuse your grace, our people made short work of the drunken knave, and thrust him out of doors."

"Well, I hope his airing will do him good," said the count, smiling, "and that he came to his senses on the street."

"It seems not, though," replied Chamberlain von Lehndorf, making a signal to the halberdiers stationed on both sides of the doors of the grand reception hall that they should open the door—"no, it seems that the airing did the drunken soldier no good. For, only think, gracious sir, just now, as I passed through the front entry to get to your apartments, there the man stood, and as soon as he saw me he sprang at me, seized my arm, and whispered: 'Chamberlain von Lehndorf, I *must* speak to the Stadtholder. Only tell him my name, and I know that he will receive me.'"

"And did he tell you his name, Lehndorf?" asked the count, as he walked forward.

"Yes indeed, noble sir," laughed the chamberlain; "with monstrously important air he whispered his name in my ear, as if he had been the Pope in disguise or the Emperor himself. I laughed outright, and left him standing."

The count now stood close before the wide-open doors which led into the grand reception hall. The halberdiers struck upon the ground with their gold-headed staves; in the spacious, magnificently decorated hall appeared a dense throng of army officers in their glittering uniforms and civil dignitaries in their ceremonial garbs of office. Six pages, in richly embroidered velvet suits, stood on both sides of the door, while in the raised gilded balcony opposite the musicians arose and began to pour forth a thundering peal of welcome as soon as they caught sight of the Stadtholder.

Count Schwarzenberg, however, took no notice of this; he stood upon the threshold of the door, and his smiling face was still turned upon his chamberlain.

"What name did the fellow give?" asked he carelessly.

"Oh, a very fine name, gracious sir. He had the same name as the blessed archangel—Gabriel!"

"Gabriel?" echoed the count hastily and at the top of his voice, for the musicians played so loud that a man could hardly hear his own voice, even though he shouted. "Only Gabriel, nothing further?"

"Yes, most gracious sir," screamed the chamberlain, "he did call a second name; but I confess I did not pay much attention to it. I believe, though, it was Nietzel. Yes, yes, I am quite sure he said Gabriel Nietzel!"

He shouted this out very loud, not observing, as he pronounced his last words, that the music had ceased; the name Gabriel Nietzel, therefore, rang like a loud call through the vast apartment, and the brilliant, courtly assemblage laughed, although they understood not the connection between the loud call and the hushing of the music. Chamberlain von Lehndorf laughed too, and turned smiling to the count to apologize for his involuntary trangression.

But Count Schwarzenberg did not laugh; he looked pale, and with trembling lips addressed his chamberlain: "Lehndorf, hurry out and conduct the soldier to my antechamber. Tell him I will come to him directly. Do not let the man get out of your sight, watch him closely. In five minutes, as soon as I have welcomed my guests, I will come to the antechamber and speak to the fellow myself. Go!"

The chamberlain flew off to obey this behest, and the Stadtholder entered the hall. Behind him were ranged the twelve pages in their glittering clothes, then followed the officers of the household in splendid uniforms. Again the trumpets of the musicians sent forth their animating peals, and, ranged around the hall in a wide circle, the staff officers, high dignitaries, lords of the supreme court and of the magistracy, all with the insignia of their rank, bowed reverentially before the almighty lord, who now made his progress through the hall amid the clashing of trombones and trumpets. He passed along the brilliant rows of guests with quick, hurried step, but while his lips wore a smile, he thought to himself, "When this abominable ceremony is over and I have com-

pleted the circuit, I shall absent myself; I shall see if it is the veritable Gabriel Nietzel, the——"

Just at this moment Chamberlain von Lehndorf approached him, and bent close to his ear. "Most gracious sir!" he cried amid the clash of trumpets—"most gracious sir, the man is no longer there. He has gone and can no longer be seen in the street!"

The Stadtholder gave a slight nod of the head, and proceeded to bid his guests welcome.

VI.—Revenge.

Sumptuous was the feast, choice were the viands, and costly the fragrant wines. The guests of the Stadtholder in the Mark were full of rapture, full of admiration, and their lips were lavish in praises of the noble count, while their eyes shone brighter from partaking of the generous wine. The lackeys flew up and down the hall, waiting upon the guests, the pages stood behind the count's chair, and offered his excellency food and drink in vessels of gold. At first they sat at table with grave and dignified demeanor, but gradually the delicious viands enlivened their hearts, the glowing wine loosened their tongues, and now they laughed and talked merrily and gave themselves entirely up to the pleasures of the table. Louder swelled the hum of mingled voices. Peals of laughter rang through the banquet hall, until in their turn they were drowned by bursts of dashing music, whose inspiring strains blended with the animated tones of the human voice. Count Adam Schwarzenberg, who sat at the upper end of the table under a canopy of purple velvet, heard all this, and yet it seemed to him like a dream, and as if all this bustle, laughing, and merrymaking came to him from the distant past.

He heard the confusion of voices, the clangor of the music, but it sounded hollow in his ear, and above all rang fearfully distinct the name which Lehndorf had pronounced—Gabriel

Nietzel! His guests sang and laughed, but he heard only that one name—Gabriel Nietzel!

Round about the long table he saw only glad faces, beaming eyes, and flushed cheeks, but he saw them vanish and other faces arise before his inner eye, faces of the past! There sat the Elector George William, with his easy, good-natured countenance. He nodded smilingly at him, and his glance, full of affection, rested upon *him*, the favorite. Yes, he had loved him dearly, that good Elector! Out of the little, insignificant Count Schwarzenberg he had made a mighty lord, had exalted him into a Stadtholder, into the most powerful subject in his realm! And how had he requited him?

"Gabriel Nietzel! Gabriel Nietzel!" He heard the maddening words ringing clearly and distinctly above the din of music, song, and laughter—"Gabriel Nietzel!"

There he stood in page's dress, across there, behind the chair of the young Electoral Prince, whose pale, noble features had just begun to quiver convulsively—there he stood and cast a look of intelligence at *him*, Count Schwarzenberg.

"Gabriel Nietzel! Gabriel Nietzel!"

Ever thus rang the echo through the hall, and however varied the medley of sounds, to him all was embodied in that name. For long months he had caused search to be made for him, but nobody had been able to bring him any tidings of Gabriel Nietzel's whereabouts. So, gradually, he had forgotten him, and his anxiety about him had died away. Why must this dreaded name make itself heard again to-day, just to-day, when he was inaugurating the bright days of his future with this splendid feast? Why must that hateful name mingle with the rejoicings of his merry guests?

He would think of it no more, no more allow himself to be haunted by phantoms of the past! Away with memories, away with that unhappy name! Vehemently, indignantly he shook his lofty head, as if these memories were only troublesome insects to be driven away by the mere wrinkling of his brow. He even called a smile to his lips, and with a proud effort at self-control arose from his armchair and lifted the golden beaker on high, in his right hand.

If he spoke himself, he would no longer hear that perpetual

ringing and singing within his breast—"Gabriel Nietzel! Gabriel Nietzel!"

He lifted the golden beaker yet higher and bowed right and left to his guests, who had risen to their feet and looked at him full of expectancy.

"To the health of the Emperor Ferdinand, our most gracious Sovereign and lord!"

The musicians struck their most triumphant melody; with loud huzzas and shouts the guests repeated, "To the health of our most gracious lord and Emperor!"

"Gabriel Nietzel! Gabriel Nietzel!" Still it rang in Schwarzenberg's ears, and he sank back in his armchair and felt a sense of helpless despondency creep over his heart.

The guests followed his example and resumed their seats. A momentary silence ensued. All at once Chamberlain von Lehndorf rose from his place, took his glass with him, and went along the table to the Counselor of the Exchequer von Lastrow, who was carrying on an earnest conversation in an undertone with the burgomaster of Berlin. The chamberlain's face was flushed with wine, his eyes sparkled, and his gait was so wavering and unsteady that even the goblet in his hand swung to and fro.

"Counselor von Lastrow," he said, with loud, peremptory voice, "you refused to drink the health proposed by his excellency the Stadtholder in the Mark. The toast was to his Majesty our lord and Emperor. You did not lift up your glass, nor touch that of your neighbor. Wherefore was this? Why did you not drink to the welfare of our lord and Emperor?"

"I will tell you why, Chamberlain von Lehndorf," replied Herr von Lastrow, leaping up and confronting the chamberlain in his gay uniform, with dagger dangling at his side—"I will tell you why I did not accept the Stadtholder's toast, and may all his guests hear and ponder. I thank you, Sir Chamberlain, for affording me an opportunity of expressing myself openly and candidly on this subject. Permit me, gentlemen, to answer in the hearing of you all the question which the chamberlain has addressed to me."

As the counselor thus spoke his large black eyes surveyed

both sides of the long table. All present were silenced, all eyes were directed to the lower end of the table, and each one listened with strained attention to hear the answer of Herr von Lastrow.

Count Schwarzenberg had risen from his chair and given the rash chamberlain a look of displeasure. Yet he felt so embarrassed by his own anxiety that he dared not call him.

"Gabriel Nietzel! Gabriel Nietzel!" rang ever in his ears, frightening away all other sounds, until they seemed to reach him only as dim and hollow echoes from afar.

"Gentlemen!" cried Herr von Lastrow now, in a loud voice, "I did not drink the Stadtholder's toast because it would have been contrary to my duty and my oath. Ferdinand is Emperor of the German Empire, and as such we owe him reverence and respect, but when the toast styles him our lord and Emperor I can not respond to it, for Ferdinand is not my lord! No, the Elector Frederick William is my master, and now I lift my glass and cry, 'Long live Frederick William, our lord and Elector!'"

"Long live Frederick, our lord and Elector!" shouted voices here and there at the table, and all followers of the Elector sprang from their seats, held aloft their glasses, and shouted again and again, "Long live Frederick William, our lord and Elector!"

"Strike up, musicians!" called Herr von Lastrow to the balcony, where the musicians sat, who lifted their trombones and trumpets and put them to their lips. But before a note was struck, Lehndorf shouted fiercely up to them: "Silence! Dare not to blow a single blast! I forbid you in the name of our master, the Emperor!"

A wild yell of indignation from the Electoralists and a loud burst of applause from the Imperialists followed these words. Nobody remembered any longer that he was there as the guest of Schwarzenberg, the proud count and Stadtholder. All prudence, all sense of respect was swallowed up in the storms of political passion. With threatening aspect and flashing eyes stood the Electoralists and Imperialists opposite each other, and, while the former lifted up their glasses, to touch them in honor of their Sovereign and Elector, the

latter knocked their glasses tumultuously on the table, and broke out into loud laughter and deafening imprecations. No one any longer paid honor to the master of the house—no one thought of him, in fact. He had risen from his seat with the intention of going to the other end of the table, where now a furious duel of words was progressing between his chamberlain and Herr von Lastrow. He desired to pacify them, to smooth over the contention; but it was already too late, for ere he had reached the middle of the hall, a catastrophe had occurred between the contending parties. Counselor von Lastrow raised his arm, and administered to Chamberlain Lehndorf a sounding box upon the cheek.

One unanimous shriek of rage from the Imperialists, and they rushed toward Lehndorf and drew their swords. Behind Lastrow the Electoralists ranged themselves, and they, too, laid bare their weapons.

Count Schwarzenberg tottered back. He perceived that it was too late to pacify now, that all temporizing had become impossible. He had a feeling that he must flee away, that it did not comport with his dignity to stand there powerless and inactive between two factions. In this moment of weakness and indecision his confidential valet approached him.

"Most gracious sir," he whispered, "a courier from Regensburg, from Count John Adolphus, has just arrived. I have already laid the letter upon your excellency's writing table. It is marked 'urgent.'"

Count Schwarzenberg turned to hurry from the hall, to escape the wild tumult, to take refuge in his cabinet, and, above all things, to read the long-expected letter from his son.

The uproar in the hall waxed ever fiercer, weapons clashed and wild battle cries resounded. He quickened his pace, and opened the door of the hall. Behind him rang out a piercing shriek, a death cry! Quivering in every fiber of his being the count turned round to—— Once more that piercing shriek was heard, and Herr von Lastrow, with Lehndorf's dagger in his breast, fell backward into the arms of his friends with the death rattle in his throat.*

* This whole scene is historical. See von Orlich, History of Prussia, vol. i, p. 59.

Count Schwarzenberg, seized with horror, rushed on through the deserted, brilliantly lighted apartments—on, ever on. But that fearful shriek went with him, ringing ever in his ears. It drove him onward like a fury, and his hair stood on end and his heart beat to bursting.

He had heard it once before, that death cry!

In the stillness of night it had sounded that time in the castle of Berlin, when a pale woman had knelt at his feet and pleaded for her life! Often had he heard it since; it had awakened him from sleep, it had often startled him when engaged in merry conversation with his friends; at the festive board it had drowned the music as far as he was concerned, this death cry, this Fury of his conscience!

At last he reached his cabinet. He threw himself into a chair. God be thanked, he was alone here! He had quiet and solitude here!

He surveyed the room and an infinite feeling of relief and security came over him.

Alone!

"Gabriel Nietzel! Gabriel Nietzel!" was whispered in his heart, and he looked timidly around, as if he feared to see him in each corner. Then a shriek resounded in his ear—that death cry!

It had penetrated into his quiet cabinet, she stood behind him, she screamed in his ear, "Gabriel Nietzel! Rebecca!"

Perfectly unmanned, the count leaned back in his easy-chair, the sweat standing in great drops upon his brow. He no longer even remembered that he had come there to read his son's important letter! His soul was shattered in its inmost depths. Gabriel Nietzel was there again! A murder had been committed in his house—at his table! Committed, too, by his own servant, his favorite, his friend! He durst not pardon him; he must punish the murderer according to the law. He must pronounce sentence of death on him, who had slain his fellow-man! He foresaw this in the future! He saw himself as judge, the viceregent of God and justice, opposite the pale criminal, his servant, his friend, upon whom he pronounced sentence!

He! Would his lips dare to utter a sentence of death? Dared the murderer condemn?

"Gabriel Nietzel! Gabriel Nietzel! Rebecca! Rebecca!" screamed the voice behind his chair. But hark! what noise is that? What means that confused jumble of groans and yells and shouts—that howling as of fierce and sweeping winds, that roar as of the mighty deep? What is that so like the rolling of thunder? Are those wolflike howls the voices of men? Is that the tramp of human feet? Before his windows it surges and dashes, howls and roars!

With difficulty Schwarzenberg rises from his chair, and, creeping to the window, conceals himself behind the hangings and cautiously looks out upon the street. A dense throng of soldiers surges beneath his windows; the whole street, the whole square is packed with them. Angry faces, the voices of furious men, hundreds upon hundreds of uplifted fists and portentous growls!

"He shall pay us our money! He wants to cheat us out of our pay! He wants to put us upon summer allowance and pocket the rest of the money! It is said this is done by the Elector's command. But it is a lie, an abominable lie! Schwarzenberg lets nobody command him. He is master here. He wants us to starve that his own riches may be increased. We will not suffer it! He shall pay us for it! Hurrah! Storm the house!"

"A mutiny!" muttered Count Schwarzenberg. "They were to have rebelled, and so they do. But they rebel against me! I flung down the sword, and its point is turned against myself. So the spirits of hell grant what they have promised us—what we have purchased at the price of our souls! They give the reward, but even while they are paying it out to us it becomes a curse and ruins us!"

How they storm and rage and roar without! How they beat and hammer against the locked doors! Count Schwarzenberg stands behind the window and hears them! He hears other voices, too—Goldacker, Kracht, and Rochow endeavoring to calm them, exhorting them to be patient.

Futile efforts! Ever louder grow the knocking and thundering against the house. Stones are hurled against

the walls, the window shutters rattle and are shivered to pieces, the doors creak and give way.

"If they attempt to murder me, I shall not stand on the defensive," murmurs Count Schwarzenberg to himself, as he retires from the window, slowly traverses the apartment, and again sinks down upon the chair by his writing table. The door of the cabinet is violently torn open, and in rush the Commandants von Kracht and von Rochow, followed by the captains of their regiments.

"Gracious sir, it is impossible to calm these madmen. They no longer heed orders. They are beside themselves with rage. They have already broken open the doors and forced their way into the entrance hall. They will plunder and despoil the whole palace! We can save nothing more, prevent nothing more! You are lost, so are we, and all Berlin!"

"Be it so!" says Schwarzenberg loftily. "Let the whole earth fall down and overwhelm me in its ruins. I shall but be buried beneath them!"

"Gracious sir, only hear! The howling and yelling come ever nearer, and are continually gaining in strength! Gracious sir, have pity upon us, upon yourself! Save us all!"

"Save? How can I save any one? Will those savage hordes obey me, when they refuse submission to you, their officers?"

"Gracious sir, they demand their pay! They demand money! Nothing will appease them but money, and assurances that they shall have their winter allowance. Give us money to quiet that raging host! Money—money!"

"How much would you have? How much is needful to tame that fierce, wild horde?"

"Three hundred dollars!" calls out Herr von Kracht.

"No; four hundred dollars!" shouts Herr von Rochow.

"Five hundred dollars!" growls Herr von Goldacker. "No, give us six hundred dollars, which would do the thing thoroughly."

"Well, be it six hundred dollars then," says the count, with an expression of contemptuous scorn. "Stay here, gentlemen; I will return directly. I am only going to fetch the money."

He left the cabinet and entered his sleeping apartment, where, at the side of the bed, stood the great iron chest to which he alone had the key. After a few minutes he rejoined the officers in his cabinet. He had six rolls of money in his hand, two of which he handed to each of the three gentlemen.

"Here, gentlemen," he said, with bitter mockery, "here are the commandants who have authority to bring their troops to order. Go and show them to your men, and order them to follow these commandants to the cathedral square, and there distribute the money among them."

The gentlemen wished to thank him, but with a wave of his hand he pointed them to the door, and they hurried out to their soldiers.

Schwarzenberg looked after them, and listened to the rumbling and roaring without in the entrance hall of his house. Suddenly it became gentler, and finally ceased altogether. Then, after a pause, rang forth a loud shout of joy, and again the street filled with soldiers, again was heard the loud tramp of feet, the uproar and confusion of many tongues. "The wretches have marched off," murmured Count Schwarzenberg to himself. "Yes, yes, with money we buy love, with money hatred and——"

"Hurrah! Long live Count Schwarzenberg!" sounded below his windows. "Long live the Stadtholder in the Mark!"

"That shout costs me six hundred dollars," said he, shrugging his shoulders. "To-morrow, most likely the mob will come again to threaten me, that I may again purchase a cheer from them. Well, for the present at least I have rest. Nobody shall disturb me. Nobody shall intrude upon me."

He stepped to the doors leading into his sleeping room and antechamber, and bolted them both. He did not think of the secret door which led to the little corridor and thence to the private staircase, and did not bolt that. Why should he have done so? The steps were so little used, so few knew of them, so few, of the existence of the little side door which led to them. It was not necessary to lock that door, for no one would come to him in that way.

He was alone. God be praised, quite alone! And now

again he remembered the important letter, which he had forgotten while the soldiers' riot was in progress. There lay his son's letter, on his writing table. He hastened thither and seated himself in the armchair, taking up the letter and examining its address. The sight of his son's handwriting rejoiced his heart, as a greeting from afar.

He drew a deep sigh of relief. All anguish, all cares had left him as soon as he took his son's letter in his hand. Even the warning voice in his heart had hushed, even the Fury no longer stood behind his chair; he no longer heard her death cry. All was silent in that spacious apartment behind him, on which he turned his back.

He took the letter, broke the seal, and slowly unfolded the paper. But now he put off reading its contents for one moment more. This sheet of paper contained the decision of his whole future, it would either exalt him into a reigning prince by bringing him the Emperor's sanction, or lower him into an underling of the Elector, making him a nobody, if—— But no, it was impossible! The Emperor would not disavow him! It was folly to think of such a thing!

He fixed his eyes on the paper and began to read. But as he read, his breath came ever quicker, his cheeks became more pale, his brow more clouded. His hands began to tremble so violently that the paper which they held rattled and shook, and finally dropped on the table.

Motionless and gasping for breath the count sat there, staring at the letter. Then its contents flashed through him like a sudden shock, and, collecting his faculties, he once more snatched up the paper.

"It is impossible!" he cried aloud, "I read falsely! That can not be! My eyes surely deceived me! My ears shall lend their evidence! I will hear my sentence of condemnation!"

And with loud voice, occasionally interrupted by the convulsive groans which escaped his breast, he read: "I am grieved to announce to you, beloved and honored father, that our affairs have not prospered, as we hoped and expected. Through the intercession of good Father Silvio, I had a long interview yesterday with the Emperor. And the result of it is this: The Emperor loves you, it is true; he calls you his

most faithful servant, and promises ever to be a gracious Sovereign to you, but he will never further your projects of becoming an independent ruler, and will not assist you to effect the Elector's ruin, that you may usurp his place. He rather wishes you to remain what you are—Stadtholder in the Mark—and to exert all your energies in maintaining that position, since the Emperor relies upon your good offices for securing him an ally in the Elector. The Mark is to remain Frederick William's domain, but the Elector must become an Imperialist. Such is the will and pleasure of the Emperor. He urged me to beg you to evince more complaisance and deference for the Elector, that you may acquire influence over him. The Emperor had been much shocked by the news sent him from Königsberg by Martinitz. It appears certain from this information, my dear father, that the Elector is much set against you, and that he only makes use of your continuance in office as a mask, behind which he may, unseen, direct his missiles against you. The Elector has taken your refusal to come to Königsberg upon his invitation in very ill part, and it has excited his highest displeasure. We have played a dangerous game, and I fear we have lost it."

"Lost!" screamed the count, crushing the paper in his hand into a ball and dashing it to the ground. "Yes, I have lost and am ruined! The end and aim of my whole life are defeated! I aimed at the summit, and when I have nearly reached my goal an invisible hand hurls me back, and I am plunged into an abyss!"

"As serves you right, for God is just!" said a solemn voice behind him, and a hand was laid heavily upon his shoulder.

Count Schwarzenberg uttered a shriek of horror and turned round. A soldier stood behind him—an Imperial soldier in dirty, tattered garments, a poor, miserable man. And yet the count sprang from his chair, as if in the presence of some prince or superior being before whom he must bow with reverence. With bowed head he stood before this soldier, and dared not look him in the face!

Yes, it was a prince, it was a superior being before whom he bowed! He stood before his judge, he stood before his conscience! He knew it, he felt it! A cold hand was laid upon

his heart and contracted it convulsively; it was laid upon his head and bowed it low. Death was there, and his name was Gabriel Nietzel!

"Gabriel Nietzel!" murmured his ashy pale lips, "Gabriel Nietzel!"

"You recognize me, then?" said the soldier quietly and coldly. "Look at me, count, lift your eyes upon me! I want to see your countenance!"

With a last effort of strength Count Schwarzenberg resumed his self-control. He raised his head, affecting his usual proud and self-satisfied air. "Gabriel Nietzel!" he cried, "Whence come you? What would you have of me? How did you come in here?"

"How did I come in?" repeated he. "Through yon door!"

And he pointed at the door opening upon the secret staircase. "I came twice and begged to be allowed access to you, but was refused. This time I admitted myself. You once sent me down the secret stairway, and pointed out that mode of exit to me yourself, when your son was coming to visit you. What do I want? I want you to give me my wife, my Rebecca; and if you have murdered her, I want *your life!*"

"Would you murder me?" exclaimed the count in horror, while moving slowly backward. Keeping his eyes fixed upon Gabriel Nietzel, he sought to gain the door to his bedchamber. But Nietzel guessed his design and disdainfully shook his head. "Do not take that trouble," he said. "I have abstracted both keys and put them in my pocket. You can not escape me."

Count Schwarzenberg's eyes darted a quick, involuntary glance across at the round table on which stood his bell. Nietzel intercepted this glance and understood that the count meant to call his people. He took up the bell and thrust it into his bosom.

"Give up your efforts to evade me," he said. "God sends me to you. God will punish your crime by means of this hand, which you once bribed to commit a murderous deed. Count Schwarzenberg, you have acted the part of the devil toward

me! You have robbed me of my soul! Give it back to me! I demand of you my soul!"

"He is insane," said Count Schwarzenberg, softly to himself. But Nietzel caught his meaning.

"No," he said sorrowfully—"no, I am not insane. God has denied me that consolation. I know what has been, and what is. There was a time—a glorious, blessed time—when I forgot everything, when all pain was banished, and I was happy—ah, so happy! They said, indeed, that I was mad; they called it sickness, forsooth, and locked me up, and tormented me. But I was so happy, for I saw my Rebecca always before me, she was ever at my side and—— Count, where have you left my Rebecca? Where is she? Give her to me! I will have her again, my own Rebecca! Give her back to me, directly, on the spot!"

He seized him with both his arms, his hands clutching his shoulders like claws. "Where is Rebecca—my Rebecca?"

Gabriel Nietzel stared at the count with frenzied fury, with devouring grief. Schwarzenberg cast down his eyes, a shudder passed over his frame, and terror-stricken he turned his head. It seemed to him as if, while Gabriel pressed upon his shoulders in front, some one came stealthily up to him from behind. He heard a cry—a death cry! The Fury was there again! He could not escape her now!

"Let me go, Gabriel Nietzel," he said feebly. "Quit your hold, go away. I will give you treasures, honors, distinctions, if you only quit your hold and go away!"

"What will you give me, if I let you go?" screamed Gabriel Nietzel, tightening his grasp and shaking him violently. "What will you give me?"

"I will give you a fine house, I will give you thousands, I will give you rank and titles. Tell me what you want, and I will give it to you!"

"Give me Rebecca! I want *her* and her alone! Tell me where she is or I will kill you!"

"She is in my house at Spandow," said the count hastily. "Come, we will go away. You shall have your Rebecca again. Come, let us go! Rebecca is longing for you! Come!"

"You are deceiving me!" laughed Gabriel Nietzel. "I

see it in your eyes, you are deceiving me. You want me to open the doors, and then you will call your people. There is no truth in what you say. Rebecca is not at Spandow; I know that, for I have been there. I stood many hours before the windows of your palace and called upon her name. She would have heard if she had been there; she would have come to me—she would have freed me from all my sufferings. For, you must know, my Rebecca loved me! Because she loved me, that she might expiate the crime which you had tempted me to commit, that she might lift the weight of sin from my head, she went back to Berlin and bade me go on with our child. I had solemnly sworn that to her, and I kept my oath. I went on, following the route we had agreed upon together. I waited for her at every resting place, and always waited in vain. I came to Venice, and went to the house of Rebecca's father; but she was not there. I wanted to go in search of her, but they held me fast, they imprisoned me in a dark dungeon. And there I sat a whole century, and yet was patient, ever waiting for the moment when I might escape from them and go to look for my Rebecca. And at last the moment came. The jailer entered to bring me my food; we were quite alone, and they had taken off my chains, for I had been harmless and gentle for some months past. I seized him, choked him, so that he could not scream, took his keys, and fled. God helped me; he always pities the poor and unfortunate—he knew that I wanted to search for Rebecca. I came to Germany; I enlisted as a soldier, for I durst not die of hunger, else I could not reach Berlin and find my Rebecca. But now I am here, and ask you in the name of God and in view of the judgment day, where is Rebecca?"

"I do not know," murmured Count Schwarzenberg, whom Gabriel Nietzel still held closely pinioned in his grasp.

"You do not know?" shrieked Gabriel Nietzel. "I read it in your face, you have murdered her. Yes, yes, I see it, I feel it—you have murdered her! Confess it, wretch! fall down upon your knees and confess that you have murdered Rebecca!"

Schwarzenberg would have denied it, but he could not; conscience paralyzed his tongue, so that it could not utter the

falsehood. He wanted to make resistance against those dreadful hands which held him fast, but he had no more power. Everything swam before him, there was a roaring in his ears, his knees tottered and shook, and the perspiration stood in great drops upon his brow.

"Mercy," he murmured, with quivering lips—"mercy! I will make good again, I——"

"Can you give me Rebecca again?" asked Gabriel, who now suddenly passed from the extreme of wrath to a cold tranquillity. "Can you undo and make null your evil deeds? Can you take from me the guilt you brought upon me? No, you can not, and therefore you must die, for crime must be expiated! You murdered my Rebecca, and therefore I shall murder you. Adam Schwarzenberg, pray your last prayer, for I am here to kill you!"

"No, you will not!" cried Schwarzenberg. "No; you will be reasonable—you will accept my offers! I promise you wealth and consideration, I——"

"Silence and pray, for you must die! Death is here, Adam Schwarzenberg, for Gabriel Nietzel is here!"

He saw it, he knew that Gabriel spoke the truth. He knew that this man, with the pale, distorted, grief-worn face, with those large eyes flaming with the fires of insanity, was to be his murderer. Death had come to summon him away—death in the form of Gabriel Nietzel!

And so, he was to die! He, the mighty, the rich, the noble Count Schwarzenberg! *He* whose name all Germany revered, *he* before whom all bowed in humility, who had had control over millions! *He* was to die by the hand of a madman, to die alone, unwept! If his son were only with him, his dear, his only son, who loved him, who——

"Have you prayed?" asked Gabriel Nietzel, who had been waiting in silence.

"No," said Schwarzenberg, startled out of his train of thought—"no, I have not prayed! Why do you ask that?"

"Because you must die!" replied Gabriel Nietzel, grasping him more firmly with his left hand, and with his right drawing forth a dagger from his breast. The count profited by this moment, tore himself loose, jumped back, and rushed

toward the open door of the secret passage. But Nietzel sprang past him, and already stood before the door, confronting him again! As he saw the dagger glitter in the air, he remembered, with the rapidity of thought, the instant when he had stood before Rebecca, with the drawn dagger in his hand.

She had cried "Mercy! mercy!" He wanted to cry so, too, but could not! Like a flash of lightning it darted across his eyes, like a crushing blow it fell upon his brain. He uttered a piercing shriek, tumbled backward, and fell upon the ground, with rattling in his throat and with dimmed eyes!

Gabriel Nietzel bent over him and looked long into that convulsed countenance, and into those eyes which were fixed upon him with a look of entreaty! Nietzel understood that look. "No," he said roughly—"no, I do not forgive you, I have no pity upon you. Be you cursed and condemned, and go to the grave in your sins! God has been gracious to me; he has not willed it that I should be stained with your blood. He has laid his own hand upon you and smitten you. You will perhaps have long to suffer yet. Suffer!"

He put up his dagger, strode through the apartment, stepped out upon the secret passage and closed the door behind him.

"And now," he said, when he found himself outside—"now I shall go and acknowledge my sins to the Elector. He will be compassionate, and allow me to mount the scaffold. I shall then have atoned for all, and will once more be united to my Rebecca!"

Was it possible that this wretched, sobbing, deathly pale something, lying there on the floor of the cabinet, was but a few hours since the proud, the mighty, the dreaded and courted Count Adam von Schwarzenberg, the Stadtholder in the Mark? Now he was a poor dying beggar, longing for a drink of water, and with no one near to hand him the refreshing draught; who longed for a tear, and had no one to weep for him; who longed for forgiveness, and God himself would not forgive him! Hours, eternities of anguish went by, and still he lay helpless and solitary upon the floor! He plainly heard how they came and knocked, and then moved softly away, because they supposed that he had shut himself up

to work. He heard them, but he could not call, for his tongue was palsied! He could not move, for his limbs were paralyzed!

Hours, eternities of anguish went by. Then his old valet came through the secret door, creeping softly in, and found him, that pitiable creature, on the floor, and screamed for help. Then the doors were broken down, and the servants came and the physicians. They lifted him up and bore him to the divan. He breathed, he lived! Perhaps help might not yet be impossible!

Everything was tried, but all in vain. He still lived and breathed, but he was paralyzed in all his limbs, and soon the inner organs, too, refused to exercise their functions. They removed the invalid to Spandow because the mutinous regiments were perpetually threatening to renew their attack upon the count's palace, and might disturb the repose of the dying man. There he lay in his castle, a living corpse for four days more, with open eyes, giving token that he heard and understood what was passing about him. Finally, at the end of four days, on the 4th of March, 1641, Count Adam von Schwarzenberg closed his eyes, and of the haughty, powerful, dreaded Stadtholder in the Mark, nothing was left but cold, stiff clay! *

* Count Schwarzenberg was buried in the village church at Spandow, his entrails in a separate case beside him. The sudden and unexpected death of the Stadtholder excited uncommon attention through Germany, and a report was circulated that upon the count's retiring to Spandow on account of ill health the Elector had caused him to be arrested, and secretly beheaded in prison. Even as late as the times of Frederick the Great this report was commonly believed, and Frederick, when he wished to write a history of the reigning house, had the count's coffin opened to ascertain whether the head was separate from the body. No trace of a violent severing of the head from the body was, however, discovered. See Pollnitz, Memoirs, vol. iv, p. 40; Droysen, vol. iii, p. 232.

VII.—The Sealing of the Documents.

A courier, sent to Regensburg by Herr von Kracht, commandant of Berlin, immediately upon the decease of Count Adam Schwarzenberg, had prompted his son Count John Adolphus to expedite his departure from that place, and to journey by forced stages to Berlin. He repaired first to Spandow, and had his father's embalmed remains interred with great pomp in the village church. After having thus discharged this first filial duty, he proceeded to Berlin to take possession of the inheritance left him by his father.

The whole inheritance! Not the smallest part of it should be abstracted from him! In his father's lifetime he had been appointed his coadjutor in the Order of the Knights of Malta; now, since his father was dead he must be his successor, must be Grand Master of the Order of St. John. He sent orders to Sonnenberg, summoning a solemn chapter of the order to hold its sitting, and to send in the oath of service due him. In his father's lifetime he had been his associate in the office of Stadtholder; now, his father being no more, he claimed the stadtholdership in the Mark as his lawful heritage. And his friends and adherents strengthened the ambitious young count in these pretentions. As soon as John Adolphus had taken up his residence in Berlin, Commandant von Kracht placed guards before the gates of his palace, and every evening demanded a watchword from the young nobleman.

Commandant von Rochow of Spandow placed himself and his garrison wholly at the disposal of the "young Stadtholder," and Colonel von Goldacker swore that he would obey the orders of none other than Count John Adolphus, Grand Master of the Order of St. John and Stadtholder in the Mark.

Count John Adolphus allowed himself to be rocked in these golden dreams of power and ambition, believed in their realization, and was firmly determined to do everything to prove their truth. He accepted the guard, gave the watchword, and sent orders to Sonnenburg, as if he were already elected grand master; he required an oath of fealty from all those

places which had been pledged to his father by the Elector George William. He also issued his mandates in Berlin, and toward magistrates and judiciary he assumed the attitude of Stadtholder in the Mark. And nobody ventured to contradict him, no court had the spirit to oppose him, for the young count stood at the head of a host of powerful and influential friends; the courts were weak and powerless, and as yet no instructions had been received from the Elector at Königsberg.

Count John Adolphus husbanded his time well. He sent messengers in all directions, corresponded with all his father's friends and adherents, summoning them to rally around him, and to come sword in hand. He held correspondence also with the father confessor Silvio at Vienna, nay, even with the Emperor himself. Restlessly active was he from morning till night, his whole being absorbed in this one effort—to ruin the Elector, and to win for himself his rank and power! His friends seconded him in striving to attain this great end. Everywhere they were active, everywhere they sought to work for him and to procure him adherents. At Spandow and Berlin the Commandants von Kracht and von Rochow declared themselves ready to place garrison and fortress entirely under his direction; Colonel von Goldacker, commandant of Brandenburg, had betaken himself to his post, and only awaited the count's word to sound the tocsin of war. In Königsberg the Court Marshal von Waldow was most energetically massing the friends of Schwarzenberg, and his brother, Sebastian von Waldow, traveled from place to place, to gain friends and partisans for Count John Adolphus, and to ask them to come to Berlin, that, in case of danger, the count might be prepared to make a bold front against his foes. His friends everywhere led a life of bustle and stir, and all proclaimed themselves ready joyfully to unsheathe their swords in behalf of the young count, and to do battle for him if the Elector should refuse to confirm him in all his father's appointments.

"He will not refuse," said John Adolphus to himself, when he had just finished reading the report of his agent, Otto von Marwitz, which had only that morning reached him.

"No, the weak, impotent Elector will not dare to refuse to acknowledge me as my father's successor; for he must be well aware that I am even now more powerful in the Mark than himself, and enjoy, moreover, the favor and protection of the Emperor. He will not dare to attack me. I shall be sustained by him in my position of Stadtholder in the Mark, and then—from Stadtholder to independent Sovereign requires but one step, which I mean to take, and——"

The door was violently burst open and Sebastian von Waldow rushed in.

"Count!" he cried, gasping for breath—"Count, we are lost!"

"What is the matter? Say, what is the matter?"

"Conrad von Burgsdorf has captured the letters sent to you and myself, from Königsberg, by my brother, the marshal, in which was a full statement of a plan for open war."

"For God's sake, who says so? How do you know that?"

"One of our secret friends, who keeps his eye upon Burgsdorf, came to tell me, that I might have opportunity of warning you. In the course of a ride taken by Burgsdorf and his men in the environs of Berlin, they captured the servant whom my brother had intrusted with dispatches for you and myself.* The dispatches he sent forthwith by a courier to Königsberg, and the servant was hurried off to the fortress of Küstrin, that he might be unable to communicate with us."

"That is bad news indeed," said John Adolphus thoughtfully. "It also explains to me why Burgsdorf and his men have taken up their abode here, and frequently talk so captiously and insolently when excited by wine. It is palpable that he has been commissioned to watch and, if need be, arrest us. We must therefore be on our guard, too, and render him harmless; that is to say, we must imprison him, so that he can not imprison us."

"If I only knew the contents of the package," murmured Sebastian von Waldow. "In the last letter which I received from my brother he stated that he hoped soon to be able to announce with certainty whether the Elector would nominate you Stadtholder or select some one else. Now this very letter

* See Droysen, History of Prussian Politics.

has been intercepted, and we are left in utter darkness and uncertainty."

"Gracious sir," proclaimed an advancing lackey, "an officer from Commandant von Kracht begs to be admitted, as he is charged with a verbal message from the commandant."

"Admit him," ordered the count, going hastily to meet the officer, who was just stepping into the room.

"Sir Count, I have bad news for you. Colonel von Kracht has just been arrested. He commissioned me to convey the tidings to you as he was led away."

Count John Adolphus grew slightly pale, and exchanged a rapid glance of intelligence with Sebastian von Waldow. "Who arrested Colonel von Kracht?" he asked.

"Colonel Conrad von Burgsdorf, most gracious sir. He showed Herr von Kracht his orders, signed by the Elector himself, and, as he came with a strong posse, the colonel could not resist, but was obliged to submit."

"It is well; I thank you," said John Adolphus quietly, and the officer took his leave. "Well, Sebastian," he said, turning to his confidant, "you were right, the captured papers must have been of dangerous import, for we already see the results. Our enemies are active, and I like that, for thereby the *dénouement* will be hastened and our victory brought nearer. For conquer we will!"

"Conquer or die!" sighed Sebastian von Waldow.

Again was the door thrown open violently, and the count's high steward hurried in, trembling and pale as a sheet. "Your grace, Colonel von Burgsdorf, Colonel von Burgsdorf," stammered he.

"What of him?" inquired the count hastily. "Speak, answer me, Wallenrodt, what of Colonel von Burgsdorf?"

"Nothing further than that he ordered your high steward to conduct him hither and announce him to you," said a rough, mocking voice behind the count.

It was Conrad von Burgsdorf who thus spoke. He had just entered the apartment, and strode forward without apology or more formal salutation.

"Count John Adolphus von Schwarzenberg," continued Burgsdorf, approaching close to the count, "I have come to

do what should have been done long before, to seal the papers of the late Stadtholder in the Mark, and to take them with me."

"Very fine," returned the count contemptuously. "Will you have the goodness to tell me whether my revered father imparted any such instructions to you before his death, and if so, show me the written order, for otherwise I would not be inclined to give you credence."

"Have received no orders from the deceased count," replied Burgsdorf, shrugging his shoulders. "Would have received no orders from him, for there is only one under whom I serve, and that one is my master, the Elector Frederick William. He ordered me to affix his signet to all the papers left by Count Adam Schwarzenberg, and I have therefore come to obey these orders."

"Where is the written order?"

"Have no written order, but obtained a verbal one just a half hour ago."

"Ah, it pleases you to jest," cried Count Adolphus scornfully. "You have come from Königsberg here in a half hour? If you will condescend to receive no commands save from the Elector, then you must have spoken with him, and, as far as I know, the Elector is at Königsberg."

"Your knowledge goes not far, my pretty sir," said Burgsdorf contemptuously. "You are in everything a very unadvised and ignorant young gentleman. The Elector is indeed at Königsberg, but, nevertheless, he has made known his will to me through the newly appointed Stadtholder in the Mark, who arrived here, *incognito*, early this morning."

"Stadtholder in the Mark!" cried Count John Adolphus defiantly. "I know no one who can lay claim to that title but myself alone!"

"But I know some one who has not merely the title but the office itself, and that person is the Margrave Ernest von Jägerndorf. Herr von Metzdorf, come in!"

In answer to Burgsdorf's loud call a young officer advanced through the door leading from the adjacent room, which had been left ajar, and stood on the threshold awaiting further orders.

"Hand Count Adolphus von Schwarzenberg the Stadtholder's printed manifesto," said Burgsdorf. Lieutenant von Metzdorf drew near the count, extending toward him a huge sheet of paper. "Read, my dear little count!" cried Burgsdorf. "Only read! Yes, yes, it contains very interesting intelligence. Margrave Ernest informs the citizens of Berlin and Cologne that he has been nominated by our gracious Elector Stadtholder in the Mark, and has entered upon the duties of his new office. He further informs the good folks of Berlin, that his Electoral Grace has been pleased to appoint Conrad von Burgsdorf superintendent of all the fortresses within the Electorate and Mark of Brandenburg. Colonel Conrad von Burgsdorf am I, and in my province as superintendent of all the fortresses I shall have all those arrested who refuse to swear allegiance to their Sovereign and Elector. Colonel von Kracht has experienced this, and his confederates shall soon enough acquire like knowledge. Count von Schwarzenberg, will you have the goodness to let me proceed to seal the papers, or must I use force by virtue of my right and authority?"

"You are the stronger," replied the count, shrugging his shoulders, "or, rather, brute force is on your side, and against this 'twere irrational to contend. Do what I can not hinder. Seal up my father's papers. I should think, however, that my own papers would be exempt from this procedure, and I hope the contents of my own desk will be respected." As he spoke he cast a furtive glance upon his steward von Wallenrodt, who, nodding almost imperceptibly, slowly retreated to the door.

"I shall seal indiscriminately all the papers and desks found in the palace," exclaimed Colonel von Burgsdorf. "This whole palace, with all it contains, belonged to Count Adam Schwarzenberg, and my orders are to seal and remove all papers left by that gentleman. You see that I can not and will not make distinctions as to what is yours and what your deceased father's."

"I believe, indeed, that the art of reading is for you difficult, nay almost impossible, Colonel von Burgsdorf!"

"You believe so? You are mistaken, my young sir. I can even read what is written upon men's faces, and read upon

your brow that you are not merely puffed up with self-importance, but that you are likewise forging wicked and dangerous plans, and have been led away by your ambition to desire things unsuitable for you. Come now, count, and accompany me into your father's cabinet."

"No!" cried the count—"no, I will do no such thing! It shall not be said that I voluntarily submitted to treason and brutal violence!"

"Well, my little count," cried Burgsdorf, laughing, "if you will not act as guide of your own accord, you must be forced to do so *nolens volens*. You need not show us the way, for we will merely go from chamber to chamber and affix our seal to all the papers we can find. But the law requires your presence, and your presence we shall have. Lieutenant von Metzdorf and Lieutenant von Frohberg, each of you give an arm to Count von Schwarzenberg. Sustain and support him well, for the young gentleman feels a little unwell and can not go alone."

The two officers approached the count, who looked at them with threatening mien. "Do not dare to touch me!" he cried angrily. "I will not follow you! I will not go!"

"You will not go, will you not? Not even when my officers offer you their arms?"

"I will not go, but I shall complain to the Emperor of the violence done me, and he will procure me satisfaction."

"Well, we shall bide our time," said Burgsdorf placidly. "For the present it only concerns us to obtain your honored companionship. Since, however, you declare that you can not go afoot, I shall carry you!"

And before the young count could prevent it, Burgsdorf had seized him in his gigantic arms and lifted him up.

"Forward now, gentlemen," he said, stepping briskly a few paces in advance, bearing the count as lightly and easily in his arms as if he had been an infant.

"Let me descend from the wine cask, Colonel von Burgsdorf," said Count Adolphus, smilingly and composedly. "I have attained my end. I only wanted to defer the sealing for a few minutes. Having succeeded in effecting this, I shall no longer oppose any obstacle to your progress."

"So much the better," cried Burgsdorf, setting him on the ground. "For, even if you were as light as a feather, I would rather have free use of my arms and hands; and, besides, do not like such close contact with any birds of your plumage. Now, Sir Imperial Counselor, let us to work and commence the process of sealing."

"Well and good," said Count John Adolphus, "only permit me to ask one question. To what end this sealing, and when will the signet be removed? I am my father's sole heir; already I have had the will opened and read in the presence of competent witnesses, and in accordance with my father's expressed desire entered into possession of the whole inheritance. The affixing of the seal appears to me, therefore, to be superfluous. If done at all, it should have been attended to before the opening of the will."

"It has been delayed, alas!" replied Conrad von Burgsdorf, "and it has resulted from the fact that since the Stadtholder's death there has been nobody to issue orders or defend the right. But now, as we have once more a Stadtholder in the Mark, all will be different, and those who put themselves in opposition may be on their guard, for we seal not merely papers, but men. As regards your question, count, the sealing affects your inheritance only in so far as you have presumed to include among your estates several districts and domains pertaining to the Elector, and have been in indecent haste to take possession of them."

"These domains were given in pledge to my father, and never redeemed."

"That remains to be decided, and, for the purpose of settling this as well as many other matters, the Elector has ordained that a judicial court shall sit. He himself named the gentlemen who were to constitute this board of investigation, which will enter upon its duties early to-morrow morning, and begin by removing the seal from the papers which I am to make myself master of to-day. The chairman of this committee is the president of the privy council, von Götze."

"I know of no President von Götze."

"Yes, yes, your father deprived Herr von Götze of his office because he would not dance to the Stadtholder's piping,

and was not his devoted servant to say yes to everything. But for that very reason our young Elector has installed him again in his office, and given orders, moreover, that he be the president of the committee of investigation. And now, as I have answered all your questions with praiseworthy patience and to my own satisfaction, let us at last proceed to sealing, and make a beginning in this very room. Shut the doors, Lieutenant von Metzdorf, and allow no one to go out who was here at our entrance."

"Colonel," replied the lieutenant, "the high steward von Wallenrodt left the room a while ago, but, as you had given no orders to that effect, I could not detain him. He went out just when you took the count up in your arms."

"Humph! That is the reason why the count wanted to divert my attention for some minutes, that his steward might have time to execute his secret commission!" cried the colonel stamping his foot passionately. "We ought to have reflected that we had sly foxes to deal with, and guarded every outlet beforehand. Lieutenant von Metzdorf, place a man at every door and let no one out. Lieutenant von Frohberg, take with you four soldiers, and search the whole palace; if you find von Wallenrodt, arrest and search him."

"Colonel, that is going too far!" cried Count John Adolphus, pale with rage and excitement. "You have no right to arrest and search my servant. I interpose my protest, and will bring you to account before his Majesty the Emperor."

"I shall take care of that," replied the colonel composedly. "If I have done wrong, let the committee of investigation call me to account. The Emperor in Vienna has nothing to do with me, and has no right to meddle in the administration of justice among us."

"We shall see about that!" cried the count, with a threatening gesture.

"Yes, we shall see! But first we must see where the papers are, which we are to seal and carry off. Open that table drawer, count, and let us see what it contains."

Count Adolphus had to submit to having every desk and table searched, and wherever papers were found, the great seal of the Electoral privy council was affixed, and they were

then removed. He had also to submit to having the whole palace ransacked from garret to cellar in search of the steward von Wallenrodt. The sealing he could not prevent, but he had the satisfaction of seeing the soldiers fail in discovering the hiding place of his steward after making the strictest possible search, as well as of witnessing Colonel Burgsdorf's disappointment on opening Count Adolphus's own writing desk to find it perfectly empty.

"I said so," growled Burgsdorf. "We forgot that we were dealing with sly foxes, and barred the doors too late. Count John Adolphus von Schwarzenberg, the sealing is over. Now comes the performance of my second duty. I have to announce to you on the part of Margrave Ernest, Stadtholder in the Mark, that you are under arrest in your own house until further notice, and are on no account whatever to be allowed to leave the palace. Here is the warrant, that you may not say I am acting without orders."

He drew forth a paper, unfolded it, and handed it to the count, who rapidly glanced over it.

"I see," said he, with proud composure, "you are acting under authority, and are merely your master's faithful beadle. May I keep this warrant?"

"Why so?"

"To hand it to the Emperor, and show him with what disrespect they have dared to act against his counselor and chamberlain."

"Keep the bill of indictment," said Burgsdorf quietly. "I shall be much surprised if you shortly find yourself in a condition to present it to the Emperor in person. Certainly not just now, for you are under arrest, and can not have control of your own movements. You will therefore have the gratification of having a guard at your door, although you are not the Stadtholder. Farewell, Count John Adolphus!"

Bowing to the young count, who with a scornful laugh turned his back upon him, he left the apartment, followed by his officers.

"Metzdorf," he said outside to the young officer in the antechamber, "to you I intrust the guarding of the palace. I know you are incorruptible, and will not allow the young

gentleman to escape. Go round the palace on the outside, and before each door station two soldiers, who are to leave their posts neither by day or night. Relieve them every four hours. The Stadtholder, alas! did not order us to guard the inner doors of the house, so we must only be watchful and circumspect outside. I commit the guarding to you, and if he escapes, the responsibility rests upon yourself."

"Unless he is a magician who can vanish through the air, he shall not escape me, colonel," said the young officer, smiling. "I will stake my head upon his not going by ordinary means through the doors."

"Very well, lieutenant; but hark! Place two more sentinels at the garden railing opposite the palace. They are to watch the windows night and day, sounding an alarm as soon as they observe anything suspicious. Come now. Reconnoiter the outer doors and post the sentinels. I am going to report to the Stadtholder."

Colonel Burgsdorf left the count's palace, and repaired to the Electoral castle, where the Margrave Ernest von Jägerndorf had taken up his residence.

Count John Adolphus had stood listening at the door, and heard every word spoken by Burgsdorf to his lieutenant, and then listened to his heavy, retreating footstep. Now he heard the slamming of the front door, and rushing to the window, saw Burgsdorf mount his horse and ride off, followed by his companions and a wagon loaded with the papers which had been seized.

"Waldow!" cried the count, springing back from the window, "he has gone, and we have, God be thanked! no guard inside the house. We are unobserved."

"What good will that do us, Sir Count," sighed Waldow. "We can not leave the house, and your papers have been seized."

"Not my papers, Waldow! No, God be praised! not my papers!" exulted the count. "Did you not see that my writing desk was empty?"

"And what does that signify?"

"It signifies that my trusty steward von Wallenrodt under-

stood my hint, and, while I detained Burgsdorf, abstracted and concealed my papers."

"Think you so?" asked Waldow, shrugging his shoulders. "It seems to me more likely that the steward has imitated the rats, who always forsake a sinking ship, and has gone off. The palace has been ransacked and von Wallenrodt was nowhere to be found. He has probably gone to the new Stadtholder, thinking to benefit himself by betraying you."

"You slander my faithful servant," said the count. "I know him better, and am confident that he will not betray me. Come, Waldow, accompany me to my father's cabinet.

"I will now show you that you have judged my steward falsely," he continued, when they had reached the cabinet. "This apartment conceals a mystery, known only to my father, myself, and Wallenrodt. Now, you shall become acquainted with it, and learn at the same time that there is still good faith in the world."

He crossed the spacious apartment to the large mirror, which, reaching down to the floor, filled up the whole space between the windows. He pressed an ornament of the frame, and the mirror flew back, having become a door, which opened and revealed a niche concealed in the wall. From this niche stepped forth the steward, with a great roll of papers in his hand.

"Most gracious sir," he said quitely, handing the roll to the count, "here are the papers of your writing desk."

"Thank you, my faithful Wallenrodt!" cried Adolphus Schwarzenberg, offering him his hand. "I knew that I could count upon you, and, when the writing desk was found empty, knew that you had understood my glance. But now, before we advise as to what is further to be done, let me examine these papers, for I do not exactly know whether they contain all that I would wish to conceal from Burgsdorf and my other enemies. Step into that window recess, friends, and let me look over these papers."

The two gentlemen retired into the deep window niche, and conversed together in whispers, while Count Adolphus rummaged over the papers with quick and nervous fingers. Ever quicker, ever more nervous became the movements of

his hand, ever darker grew his brow, ever more anxious his countenance. As he laid aside the last sheet a sudden pallor overspread his face, and for a moment he leaned back in the fauteuil, quite faint and exhausted.

"Dearest sir!" cried the steward, hurrying toward him, "are not the papers all in order?"

"It is just as I feared," said the count, sighing. "My whole correspondence with my father, during my last sojourn at Regensburg, besides copies of my letters to the Emperor and Marwitz, were in the drawer of my father's writing table, and have been carried off with the rest."

"And did these letters compromise you, count?" asked Herr von Waldow, drawing nearer to him.

"With these letters in his hand, President von Götze, the chairman of the committee of investigation, can arraign me as guilty of high treason and condemn me to death."

A long pause ensued. With gloomy countenances all three cast their eyes upon the ground. Then the steward lifted up his head, with an expression of firm resolve.

"You must flee, gracious sir," he cried earnestly.

"Flee?" repeated the count, shrugging his shoulders. "Ah, you have not heard of what further happened after you withdrew to your place of concealment!"

"The whole palace is surrounded by soldiers," completed Herr von Waldow. "At each door stand two sentinels, and even at the park gate two guards are stationed."

"You see plainly, Wallenrodt, that flight is impossible," said the count.

The steward smiled. "Through doors and windows you can not escape, in truth. There is a third way, however."

"What sort of way, Wallenrodt?"

"The secret passage, count."

"I know of no secret passage."

"But I do, count. Your late revered father had this secret passage built at the time the cities revolted and the Swedes were threatening Berlin. He had fifty workmen brought from Vienna, who were kept concealed in the palace, and worked every night upon this subterranean passage, and as soon as it was completed he had the men sent back to Austria. It is

not to be supposed that you should know anything of this, count, for it happened at least fifteen years ago, when you were but a lad. While the work lasted the count resided at Spandow, taking all his household with him, that no one might know anything about the secret passage. Only the old castellan and I remained behind, to overlook the work. We were the only two besides the Stadtholder who knew the secret. You must flee through the subterranean passage, gracious sir."

"Whither does the secret passage lead?" asked the count.

"Winding along underground, it has its outlet in the little pavilion in the center of the park. The key to the outer door hangs within the passage, as does also the key to the garden gate. All is in good order, for, fearing that the count's affairs might take a bad turn, I examined the passage through its whole extent until I arrived at the pavilion. Your grace can escape in that way unperceived."

"And you, my faithful friends, will accompany me," said the count, extending his hands to the two gentlemen. "You were right just now, Waldow, when you said we should conquer or die. It seems now as if we must be ruined. Our enemies have gone to work with more zeal and determination than ourselves. While we pondered, they acted; while we tarried, they strode energetically forward. The young Elector has made good use of his time, and like a spider has caught us in the net with which he had lightly and secretly encircled us. All my foes, all the sworn adversaries of my father, has he called out to battle against us. Envy, hatred, malice, are the regiments which the young lord musters into the field, and by means of these he has for the moment conquered us. But only for the moment. A day of reckoning will come to the haughty young sir. He thinks himself free and independent, but he shall learn that there is one higher than he to whom he must bow, to whom he owes obedience. Yes, the Emperor Ferdinand will avenge me upon this arrogant young man. He will cause his proud neck to bend, and force his vassal to give me satisfaction, and to reinstate me in all my offices and dignities, which he would unjustly withhold from me. I shall go to the Emperor at Vienna, and—— Ha, what

a thought!" he exclaimed, interrupting himself. Rushing across to his writing table, whose empty drawers were stretched wide open, he tore one out and thrust his arm into the vacant space.

"The secret compartment," he cried triumphantly. "Old Burgsdorf's keen scent failed him this time. Here it is, safe and inviolate. Here!"

When he drew forth his hand it contained a small box, which he opened by touching a spring. The lid flew open; the box contained nothing but a dainty, perfumed note. Still the count esteemed it a precious possession. He took the paper and waved it exultingly above his head.

"This is my salvation!" he cried. "With this paper in my hand I am armed against all the villainy and malice of the Elector. Oh, my dear, noble father, I must thank you for this security, thank you that I shall come forth victor from this contest with my enemy. It was you who pointed out to me the significance of this paper, who gave me the wise counsel to preserve it for future use. Thank you, oh, my father! At this hour this paper is the most precious inheritance which you have left me. I shall use it in accordance with your views, and as actuated by your spirit.

"Now, my friends," he continued, "now am I ready for flight. Let us consider what is to be done."

"Gracious sir, I have already considered," replied Wallenrodt warmly, "and I hope you will approve my plan. You can not make use of the subterranean passage by day, for, as I said before, it has its outlet in the center of the park, and if you pass through the lower garden gate in safety, you have still to go through the suburbs of Cologne. Every one would recognize you, and who knows whether Colonel von Burgsdorf may not have placed sentinels there too? You must, therefore, make your escape by night. I, on the contrary, dressed as a simple burgher, will take advantage of the subterranean passage now, and, watching my opportunity, when the street is quiet will leave the park and go away."

"Where are you going, Wallenrodt?"

"To Spandow, gracious sir, to Colonel von Rochow. I

want to inform him of the course events have taken—to tell him that you are forced to leave Berlin. When nightfall comes your grace will be pleased to go through the subterranean passage in company with Herr von Waldow, emerge into the park, and then proceed up the street. Without especial haste, for any appearance of haste might excite remark, you will go to the Willow-bank Gate. Outside I will await you with two saddled horses. These you will mount, and ride at full gallop to Spandow, where Herr von Rochow will be ready to receive your grace. From that place the count can depart when so disposed."

"Your plan is good and feasible," said the count. "I accept it. Hasten, therefore, good friend, hasten to Colonel von Rochow with tidings of what has befallen us here. Tell him that the time for hesitancy and delay has passed, that the hour of action has come. He has hitherto manfully refused to give in his oath to the Elector, and therefore the fortress of Spandow belongs to the Emperor, the sworn lord of its commandant, rather than to the Elector of Brandenburg. The walls of the Imperial fort will afford us protection and security, and from that point we can begin our contest with the enemy, who has so treacherously attacked us. Be off, my Wallenrodt, be off, and may we meet to-night in freedom and joy!"

"Only forget not to arm yourself, gracious sir, and take care that no one watches and pursues you."

"I shall precede the count with two loaded pistols," cried Herr von Waldow. "I will shoot down whoever shall dare to oppose him, and open a free path for him to the Willow-bank Gate, where you will be waiting for us, Wallenrodt."

"We will both go armed and defend ourselves bravely," said Count Adolphus Schwarzenberg. "We would rather die than fall into the hands of our enemies. Go now, Wallenrodt, for you have verily a long way before you. The road to Spandow is long."

"In three hours I shall be there, honored sir. We shall then have ample time to make our preparations for defense, and meet you here at twilight with horses. Come now, gen-

tlemen, that I may show you the approach to the subterranean passage. It is in the little corridor next your late father's cabinet."

VIII.—The Flight.

How dreary and desolate was the day which Count Adolphus now passed in the palace—how the hours lengthened into days, and the minutes into hours! How glad were they when twilight at last drew near, what sighs of relief they breathed when night at last set in!

A dark, silent night. The sky was obscured by clouds, not a star was to be seen. A night well fitted for enveloping fugitives in her friendly mantle, and concealing them beneath her gloomy shades. Away now, away! Night is here! Freedom beckons! The spacious palace was to-day nothing but a close, oppressive prison. Nothing did Count Adolphus hear but the walking to and fro of the sentinels and the corporal's call to relieve guard. Nothing did he see, when he went to the window, but soldiers slowly pacing their round before the park railing.

Away from this prison, whose splendor and luxury seemed like sheer mockery, away from this house teeming with bitter memories of past grandeur and glory!

Night was here, the night of deliverance. Away, away!

They wrapped their cloaks about them, drew their hats low over their foreheads, and entered the subterranean passage. Waldow lead the way, a burning taper in one hand, a pistol in the other. Count Adolphus Schwarzenberg followed him, a pistol in either hand, firmly determined to shoot down whoever might dare to oppose his progress.

The passage was traversed, and safely the two emerged into the open air in the park pavilion. Now forward quickly, down the dark alley to the lower garden gate. The key was in his pocket, there was nothing to obstruct their flight.

One moment they paused within the half-opened gateway and listened. Nothing moved in the street without. All

life seemed already extinct, all the inhabitants of the wretched houses had retired to rest. Not a light glimmered through the windows. All was hushed and still. They pushed open the gate and stepped out upon the street. They looked up and down; nowhere did they see a sign of movement, nowhere a human form, nor anywhere hear a rustling sound. Forward now, forward up the street, around the corner of the park, across the cathedral square.

The night was quite dark, and the two fugitives looked ever ahead, not once behind them. They did not see that another shadow followed their black shadows, nor that a second shadow glided across the cathedral square to the Electoral castle.

To that castle, too, were Count Schwarzenberg's eyes directed. There it loomed up, veiled in mystery and gloom, its dim outlines barely distinguishable from the mass of overhanging clouds in the background. In the lower story, where was situated the guardroom, burned a bright light, shining like a clear, yellow star, and irradiating the darkness of the night.

Count Adolphus saw it, and also saw the light suddenly eclipsed by a shadow; then flame forth again. He saw the shadow, but did not suspect that it bore any relationship to his person or movements. He only continued to look toward the castle, and to think of the past, taking farewell of his memories, farewell of the dreams of his youth! He thought of the insult put upon him that dreadful night when he had been mocked and deceived by her whom he loved, and he vowed vengeance for the tortures endured by him that night!

"Forward, Waldow, forward!" He took his friend's arm, and they pressed on. The shadow behind them advanced when they advanced and stopped when they stood still. Through the pleasure garden the pair proceeded with hurried steps, through the gate at the castle moat they entered upon the Willow-bank suburb, then down the deserted little streets of wretched huts. They reached the great Willow-bank meadow without the walls, passing through a gate not far from the bridge over the Spree.

"Wallenrodt, are you here?" whispered Schwarzenberg.

"Yes, count, I am here."

The tramp of horse's hoofs, the voices of men speaking in whispers.

"Colonel von Rochow expects your grace. The whole fortress is at your service. He will defend you to the last man, and would rather blow the whole fortress into the air than surrender you to the enemy."

"Yes, better be blown up by gunpowder, than fall into an enemy's hands!" cries the count, vaulting with glad heart into the saddle.

"Are you ready, my friends?"

"Yes, we are ready."

The count gave the word of command, "Forward!" and grasped tighter his horse's reins.

"Halt! halt!" called a loud voice, and the shadow which had crept behind them now changed into the form of a tall and powerful man, who sprang through the gate and seized the count's horse by the bridle.

"Back!" shouted Adolphus Schwarzenberg furiously.

"Halt! halt!" cried the other. "You shall not escape. In the name of Colonel von Burgsdorf I arrest you, Count John Adolphus von Schwarzenberg."

"Who are you, poor man, who are you who dares to oppose me?"

"I am the police master Brandt. I arrest you in the name of the Stadtholder in the Mark!"

"Wretched traitor! You swore fidelity to my father, and have now become the tool of his enemies. Hands off! It will cost you your life! Back!"

"No, I will not leave you, I arrest you. You must stay here!"

"Let us make an end of this, count," shouted von Waldow. "The night is so pitch-dark that we can not distinguish friend from foe, else I would have shot him long ago."

"For the last time, hands off my horse, or I shall shoot you."

"For the last time. Yield peaceably, or I shall shoot you. Living or dead I must keep you, I have——"

A flash, the report of a pistol, a death groan interrupted the police master's words. The three horsemen bounded forward into the night. Forward at breakneck speed, but for the sand, that dreadful sand. This is the Rehberg, they know it by the sand in which the horses sink, from which they extricate themselves only to sink again. Yet what matters it if they do make rather slow progress? They will surely reach Spandow before daybreak, and Colonel von Burgsdorf will be cheated out of his precious prisoners.

What is that? What strange sound does the night wind bear to the three riders? Simultaneously all three turn in their saddles and listen.

They hear it quite plainly. It is the noise made by trotting horses. It comes on—it comes nearer.

"Wallenrodt, Waldow! We are pursued!"

"Yes, count, but we have the Rehberg almost behind us, and they must go through it. We have a good start. They will not overtake us."

"Forward, my friends, forward!"

They put spurs to their horses, they press their knees into their flanks, and the animals struggle faster through the sand. In spite of every hindrance they have now reached firmer ground and bound bravely forward. But the noise behind them has not ceased, not even become more remote. They must have good steeds, those pursuers, for they seem to come nearer and nearer.

"Friends, better die than fall into the hands of the enemy!" shouts the count. "I tell you the very moment Burgsdorf touches me I shall shoot myself. Greet my friends for me. Bid them farewell forever!"

"You will not shoot yourself, count, for the enemy will not overtake us. Forward! Put spur to your horses. Heigh! Huzza! Forward!"

They rush through the darkness!

Clouds dark and threatening course swiftly through the sky, horsemen dark and threatening course swiftly over the earth.

"Waldow! they come nearer! But we have still the start of them!"

"Only see, count! That dark mass there against the sky. That is our goal. Just one quarter of an hour and we shall be safe in Spandow."

"One quarter of an hour! An eternity! Heigh! Huzza! On! on!"

"Halt!" is heard behind them. "Halt! in the name of the Elector, in the name of the law! Halt! halt!"

"That is Burgsdorf's voice!" cries Count Schwarzenberg, and spurs his horse with such violence that it rears and then shoots forward, swift as an arrow from a bow. But the pursuers, too, dash forward, as if borne upon the wings of the wind, and the distance between them constantly grows less. Already they hear the horses pant; ever clearer, ever more distinct become the passionate outcries of Colonel Burgsdorf.

He swears, he threatens, he rages! He orders the fugitives to halt, and swears to shoot them if they do not.

What care they for threats or orders? Forward! forward! Behind them sounds a shot—a second, then a third! The balls whistle past their ears, and they laugh aloud, to prove to the enemy that they are still alive.

Before them flash lights, like golden stars, like bonfires of rejoicing.

"Count, those are the lights of Spandow! Just see those torches there! The commandant is waiting for you at the entrance to the fort with his torchbearers."

"On! on!" shout the three, and they race onward at lightning speed. And at lightning speed the pursuers follow. Nearer they come, ever nearer.

"I have them! I have caught them!" exults Burgsdorf, springing forward and stretching out his hands toward the fugitives, for it seems to him as if he can indeed lay his hand upon them. "Halt! halt! in the name of the Elector!"

"Forward! forward! What care we for the Elector? What care we for Burgsdorf? Forward!"

The lights increase in size and brilliancy. Now they distinguish torches and the figures of men.

"Are you there, count?" calls down Colonel von Rochow from the wall.

"It is I, colonel!"

The gate is open, they gallop in!

Over the wooden bridge gallop the pursuers after them. Now they are at the gate. But the gate slams to with thundering sound. The pursuers are left without.

"Undo the bolts, Colonel von Rochow! I command you, undo the bolts!"

"Who is it that dares to command me?" calls down Colonel von Rochow from the fortification walls.

"I command you! I, the commandant in chief of all the fortresses in the Mark!"

"I know no commandant in chief, and trouble myself about no such person. I am commandant of Spandow, and have sworn to serve the Emperor, and him alone."

"Colonel von Rochow, in the name of the Elector and in the name of the Stadtholder in the Mark, I command you for the last time to open the gate!"

"The Elector is not my master to command me, and as to the Stadtholder in the Mark, here he is at my side. Only Count Adolphus Schwarzenberg do I recognize as such, and he forbids my opening the gate. Go back quietly to Berlin, colonel, for the night is cold, and your ride will warm you."

"And I must pocket this insult," muttered old Burgsdorf, gnashing his teeth. "I can do nothing but turn around and go back with shame!" Almost tearfully he gave his men the order to face about and return to Berlin.

In the castle within, Count John Adolphus cordially offered his hand to Commandant von Rochow.

"Colonel, you have saved my life by furnishing me a refuge. I would have shot myself if Burgsdorf had overtaken me. I shall commend you to the Emperor's Majesty for this friendly service."

IX.—The Letter.

"Well, here you are at last," exclaimed Elector Frederick William, holding out his hand to Baron Leuchtmar von Kalkhun. "You have at last returned from your difficult journey."

"Yes, gracious sir, you may well call it a difficult journey. Four long months of endless debate, wrangling, and dispute with those arrogant Swedish lords, who were ever ready to take but never to give. Such was my experience day by day for four long months."

"Yes, you are right," said the Elector thoughtfully. "Four months have indeed elapsed since you set out upon your journey and I undertook the duties of ruler. My God! it seems to me as if many years had rolled by since then, and as if I had become an old, old man! I do not believe I have laughed once during these four months, or enjoyed one quarter of an hour of pleasure or relaxation. Discord and discussion everywhere with Emperor and empire, with the States, with Poland, Juliers and Cleves. They are all my foes, and not one single hand is held out to me in friendship. I have felt at times right lonely, Leuchtmar, and sorely sighed for you. It could not be, though, and I have learned already to submit to necessity. Necessity alone is the despotic mistress of all princes, and we nothing but her humble vassals. It is a humiliating thought, but nevertheless true. I must learn to endure mortifications, and to consider them but the price which I pay for my future."

"It grieves me to perceive that your highness is somewhat downcast and discouraged," sighed Leuchtmar, looking sadly at the Elector's pale, sober countenance, upon which the last four months had indeed left the imprint of years.

"Downcast? Yes," cried Frederick William; "for my affairs progress but slowly, and to gain anything I am compelled on all sides to make unpleasant concessions and to submit to irksome restraints. But discouraged—no, Leuchtmar, I am not discouraged, and by God's help never shall be! I know my purpose, which I shall pursue with immovable

steadfastness, and, although the results of these first four months of government are barely discernible, I comfort myself that in as many years I shall have accomplished much. It is strange, Leuchtmar, that you have returned to-day, the very day which brings home my Polish ambassador with the tidings that the King of Poland is ready solemnly to invest me with the dukedom of Prussia, thanks to our money and our fair speeches. This very day I also expect decisive news from Colonel von Burgsdorf at Berlin. On the self-same day I sent you forth. You were like doves sent from a storm-tossed ark to seek for land. Almost at the same time you return to the ark, but I fear that none of you brings with him an olive branch."

"Yet, most noble sir, I do bring you a small olive leaf," replied Leuchtmar, with a gentle smile. "I come to announce to your grace that I have at last succeeded, after a four months' contest, in wringing from the Swedish lords a few concessions, and concluding an armistice, which is to be binding for two years."

"A two years' cessation of hostilities is equivalent to ten years of refreshment, of reinvigoration!" cried the Elector with radiant looks. "Tell me, Leuchtmar, what concessions did these hard-headed Swedes make at the last moment?"

"Your highness, they have pledged themselves not to allow their soldiery to enter the Mark, unless unavoidably compelled to march through on their way elsewhere, and that then they shall be quartered and fed only under the direction of an Electoral commissary; and that, moreover, separate agreements shall be entered into with regard to the maintenance of the Swedish garrisons of forts in Pomerania and the Mark." *

"Yes," murmured the Elector, with dejected mien, "so low are we reduced that if they even acknowledge our natural rights, it strikes us in the light of a concession, a grant, and we must esteem ourselves happy in having obtained it! Ah! Leuchtmar, when will the time come when I can take my revenge for these humiliations, the time when they will bow to *me*, and when it will be for *me* to concede and grant favors?

* See Droysen, vol. iii, p. 239.

Hush, ambitious heart, be soft and still! Go on, tell me what further settlements you concluded with the Swedes."

"Gracious sir, I have no other concessions to mention, except that something has been done for the protection of our mutual traffic by sea and land. But that is as much to the advantage of the Swedes as of ourselves. The demands of the Swedes are truly far greater than their concessions!"

"What do they demand?"

"They demand in advance that they be left in undisturbed possession of the fortresses they are now masters of."

"I have not the power to take them by force of arms!" cried the Elector, shrugging his shoulders. "Let them keep what I can not force from them! What else?"

"They demand, besides, that the Werben fortress be delivered up to them."

"I will not deliver it up to them!" cried the Elector; "but I will have it destroyed, that it be not seized by the Imperialists. What else?"

"The Swedes further desire that the Küstrin Pass be closed to imperial troops."

"To that I willingly consent, for it is in accordance with my own interests," said Frederick William, smiling. "By Küstrin is the road to Stettin, and it is important for us, too, that this way be closed to the Imperialists. Methinks a time will come when it shall be closed to the Swedes as well, and once closed, I shall not open it again. What else?"

"The Swedes crave the privilege of having a resident at Küstrin, who shall attend to carrying out this article."

"That I shall never consent to!" cried the Elector passionately. "No, that can not be, for such a permission would involve degradation, and the concessions which I am willing to make for the welfare of my torn and bleeding land need not go to the extent of degradation. I must have an armistice, that my subjects may recover from the effects of these bloody, trying times, and gather strength for renewed existence. I must have an armistice, in order to gain time for the re-establishment of law and order. But there need be no armistice tending to dishonor me, and place me under Swedish surveillance in the midst of my own land. No, no Swedish spy,

no resident at Küstrin—that is the condition of my agreeing to the armistice. All else I acquiesce in."

"And I hope to prevail upon the Swedish lords to recede from this claim yet," said Leuchtmar. "Rest is very essential to them also just at this time, for they have enough to do to contend with the Imperialists, and the Danes are threatening them with war. They will not desire to be embroiled with Brandenburg at the same time. I will guarantee the conclusion of the armistice, and, if it meets your highness's approbation, will travel again to Sweden to effect this alteration and then bring the articles to your highness for your signature."

"So be it, dear Leuchtmar. Return to Stockholm. Strike the iron while it is hot. Much I hope from this armistice. It will make the lords of Warsaw, Regensburg, and Vienna more pliant and yielding, for it will show them that the Elector of Brandenburg is no longer drifting helplessly about in a leaky boat, but that he has succeeded at least in stopping one hole and keeping himself above water! And now, friend Leuchtmar, how fared you in your secret mission? Did you hand my letter to the young Queen?"

"Yes, your highness; I even had the opportunity of delivering it to her in a private audience without witnesses."

"And did she accept it in a kind and friendly manner?"

"Gracious sir," replied Leuchtmar, smiling, "a queen of fourteen years of age is very sensitive with regard to her dignity, and takes it very ill if she is not treated with due reverence and extreme devotion."

"Was my missive wanting in these respects?" asked Frederick William.

"I beg your highness's pardon, but the young Queen seemed to be rather of this opinion. She was visibly delighted when I handed her your letter, and especially delighted that she received it secretly, without witnesses, and not in the presence of Chancellor Oxenstiern, whose guardianship seems to be very irksome and unpleasant to her. The young Queen blushed, sir, when she took your letter, and I must confess that at this moment she looked pretty and graceful enough to be the wife of my gracious master. But her

countenance soon became clouded, as she read your communication, whose contents seemed to afford her little satisfaction."

"But she answered my letter, did she not, and you bring me her reply?"

"Oh, yes, most gracious sir, she answered it, and I have with me Queen Christina's reply. But I must beforehand make your grace an apology for this answer."

"Well, let me see it, Leuchtmar. Give me the answer."

Leuchtmar drew a folded paper from his pocket, and handed it to the Elector, who unfolded it. A number of torn bits of paper fell to the floor.

"What is that, Leuchtmar?" asked the Elector in amazement.

"Your highness," replied Leuchtmar, "that is Queen Christina's answer."

The Elector picked up a few of the larger scraps of paper, and examined them attentively. "It seems to me, Leuchtmar," he said, "that I recognize specimens of my own penmanship. Yes, yes, it is my writing!"

"Yes, indeed, your highness, it is your own writing. It is your letter to Queen Christina of Sweden."

"She sends it back to me torn?"

"She tore it with her own exalted hands, trampled it under her royal feet, and literally wept for rage."

"My heavens! what have I done to enrage her little Majesty so?"

"In the first place, noble sir, you wrote to the Queen in German instead of Latin, and she found that very wanting in respect, and thought you might have given yourself the trouble to write to her in the language most agreeable to her.* In the second place, you addressed the young Queen as 'Your highness,' when she is entitled to be called 'Most serene highness.' She is certain of that, for Oxenstiern had told her that he gained the title for her as an especial prerogative for her from your father and the house of Brandenburg. And in the third place, the Queen was annoyed that your writing was so cold and serious, and contained so few love words. 'If the

* Droysen, vol. iii, p. 237.

Elector had nothing more to say to me than is contained in this letter,' cried the Queen, 'he need not have troubled himself to send it privately. This is a political document, which might have been handed by his envoy to the assembled States, and read aloud in public. But, if I do run the risk of receiving and reading a letter secretly, contrary to the high chancellor's wishes, let it at least be a love letter. I merely gave you audience because I was curious to get a love letter at last, and to know how such feelings are expressed. This is no love letter, though, and to such a note I have no other answer than this.' And then the Queen tore the letter into little bits and scattered them on the floor. I gathered up the pieces, in which she aided me assiduously, lest Chancellor Oxenstiern, whom she momentarily expected, might notice something peculiar, and suspect that she had received a secret missive. I asked her most serene highness if I should bring your grace these torn bits of paper as her answer. She replied with a bewitching smile that I must do so. Her cousin Frederick William might thereby learn to write her a better letter, when she would give him a better answer. This, gracious sir, is the story of the letter you intrusted to me for Queen Christina of Sweden."

The Elector laughed aloud. "A charming story!" he cried, "for which I must thank my young relative, for she has lighted my somber existence by a ray of sunshine. It pleases me that my cousin is so forward, and thereby candid. The little maid of fourteen sighs for a love letter, and hopes that her cousin Frederick William, who sues for her hand, will write her one, and is so innocent as to suppose that he woos her because he loves her. Poor child, disappointed in her curiosity and her wish to know herself beloved! Yes, yes, it is the perpetual longing of the young heart to be loved, and when the first love letter is received, the foolish young creature fancies itself the happiest being upon earth, and feels itself transported into the blessedness of paradise. Alas! they know not that all this is only an illusion, a sweet morning dream from which they will speedily be roused by rude, ungentle hands. Leuchtmar, I can not gratify the little Queen of Sweden in her wish; I can write her no love letter, for I

would be guilty of deceiving this young heart. No, I can utter no tender protestations, while my heart is still bleeding from inflicted wounds. But a cordial, friendly letter I will write to my dear cousin. I will write to her in faultless Latin, and couch it in most reverential terms. Who knows, perhaps I may yet win her heart, and she heal mine! I will write the letter, and you shall secretly transmit it to Queen Christina. I will so express it that it shall not seem to her fitted to be read before the assembled States, even though it be no love letter. Go now, Leuchtmar, and rest after the fatigues of your journey. But to-morrow evening, when business is ended, come to me in my cabinet, and let us read a couple of Horace's odes for my strength and encouragement, as we used to do when I was still a free young man and not the Elector, the slave of position."

He offered the baron his hand, and affectionately conducted him to the door himself. Just at this moment that door was quickly opened, and a page appeared.

"Your Electoral Highness," was his announcement, "the imperial envoy, Count Martinitz, craves an audience for himself, a special messenger from the Emperor, and his attendant."

"Admit his Majesty's envoys," replied Frederick William, as he again crossed the room and seated himself in the armchair before his writing table.

X.—A Secret Audience.

The three persons announced entered the Electoral cabinet. First came Count Martinitz with important air, dressed in the richly embroidered costume of a Spanish courtier, followed by an old man of venerable aspect and the bearing of a scholar, clad in a suit of black velvet, and by a young lord in a magnificent court dress. The Elector sprang up on beholding the latter, and a flush of indignation suffused his countenance.

"Count Martinitz," he asked hastily, "whom do you bring to me?"

"Your highness," replied Martinitz, with firm, composed voice—"your highness, I beg to be allowed to present these two lords to you. This is Dr. Gebhard, a very learned and wise man, the Emperor Ferdinand's cabinet and privy counselor, sent by his Majesty to your highness, charged with a confidential and secret errand. Permit me now to present to your highness, this other gentleman."

"I know him!" cried the Elector, with flashing eyes and angry mien. "I am only too well acquainted with Count Adolphus Schwarzenberg and all the plots and intrigues concocted by him in Berlin, and his efforts to lead my officers into insubordination and revolt. But when I ordered investigations to be made into these matters, and the count should have justified his actions, the boastful lord showed himself to be but a cowardly deserter!"

"Your highness!" exclaimed the count coming forward with long strides, and touching the hilt of the dress-sword hanging at his side—"your highness, I have come to justify myself against the calumnies of my enemies. Will you be pleased to hear me patiently, and not impugn my honor as a gentleman and a count of the empire before you have listened to my justification?"

"You would justify yourself! Do you dare to attempt this?" asked the Elector indignantly. "Look, here on my table lies the paper which the States of the Mark have addressed to me, and in which they accuse you. The Emperor's Majesty has sent me a scholar, who can certainly read it aright, if I perchance have made some mistake. Read, if you please, Dr. Gebhard, read these lines, and hear what the States write to me!"

He handed the imperial legate the document and pointed out with his finger the passage in point.

Dr. Gebhard read: "Count John Adolphus Schwarzenberg, however, eluded the investigation by flight in the nighttime, and despite a guard set. In an unusual way and in utter contempt of your highness's received orders, he secretly escaped." *

"Now," cried the Elector passionately, "would you main-

* See Droysen, History of Prussian Politics, vol. iii, p. 236.

tain, that my States have reported to me what is not true?"

"It is true," said Count Schwarzenberg. "I saw myself forced to escape unjust pursuit, and——"

"Forced by your bad conscience, sir," interrupted the Elector impatiently. "You left it for others to draw out of the fire the chestnuts which you had thrown in, and when you found out that I was not the timid, powerless Prince you supposed me to be, who could be frightened at a contest with you and your faction and awed by your glory and dignity; when you saw that I would bring you to justice, you evaded the course of law and fled precipitately from the judges."

"Because I knew that these judges were my enemies, and that he who was at their head, President von Götze, had been my father's implacable foe of old."

"That is to say, he had been of old an honest, true Brandenburgher, not merely having proved himself an incorruptible man, but never having condescended to bribe others for the sake of obtaining honor, position, or wealth for himself."

"Your highness," called out the count hastily, "would you defame my father even in his grave?"

"Have I pronounced your father's name?" asked the Elector, with dignity. "Is it not rather you who asperse your late father's fame by referring to him what I said with regard to bribery?"

The count cast down his eyes and was silent. Frederick William now turned by a slow movement of the head to Count Martinitz.

"Sir Count," he said gravely and ceremoniously, "I interrupted you in your presentation. Continue it, and introduce this gentleman to me. I must know in what capacity he dares return to my dominions and intrude upon my presence."

"Your Electoral Highness, I have the honor of presenting to you the count of the empire, Adolphus John von Schwarzenberg, imperial privy counselor and chamberlain, also *attaché* and associate of the Emperor's ambassador extraordinary, furnished with a safe conduct signed by the Emperor himself."

"I well knew," cried the Elector, "that this gentleman

had made sure of his own safety before venturing near me. That was the reason of my question. As imperial officer and chamberlain he is secure against my just wrath, and his Majesty's safe conduct a glorious wall behind which to hide himself. Let him profit by it; I shall not see him behind the wall, but instead only a piece of white paper, on which his Imperial Majesty has inscribed his name, and accordingly I shall respect this piece of paper, which otherwise I would tear in twain."

"Your highness!" cried Count Schwarzenberg—"your highness, I——"

"Count von Martinitz," interposed the Elector haughtily, "I empower you to say to the ambassador extraordinary of his Imperial Majesty, that I give him leave to deliver the Emperor's message to me and to impart to me his Majesty's desires."

"Most respected lord and Elector," said Dr. Gebhard with solemnity, "his Majesty the Emperor Ferdinand sends me to your highness in the assured hope that in your justice and exalted wisdom your grace will be superior to all personal enmities, and not visit upon the son faults, perhaps unintentional, committed against you by the father."

"Of what father and son do you speak, sir?" asked the Elector.

"Of the father who for twenty years was the honored counselor and friend of Elector George William, who, faithful even beyond the tomb, forsook the earth no longer tenanted by his lord and Elector. Of the son who has committed no crime except that of being his father's heir, and not allowing his patrimony to be diminished and torn from him. For this son, in the Emperor's name, I would plead with your Electoral Highness for grace and favor, beseeching you not to deprive him of his rights, but to restore to him what belongs to him."

"Tell me, Dr. Gebhard," asked the Elector, "what those rights are of which I have deprived him, according to his Majesty's opinion, and what things I have taken from him which belong to him?"

"Already in his father's lifetime Count John Adolphus Schwarzenberg was elected his coadjutor in the Order of St.

John, therefore on his father's demise he had a right to the vacant dignity of grand master, and yet this has not been accorded him by your highness. As his father's heir, Count John Adolphus received all his father's property, and entered into possession of it. Yet this your highness did not allow him uncontested, and withheld what was his. Nay, your highness even instituted a criminal process against the young count, his father's heir. This last proceeding is especially distasteful and annoying to his Majesty; the Emperor wishes above all things that your highness withdraw this criminal suit, referring it to the imperial court at Vienna, and that you again receive Count John into favor." *

"Truly his Imperial Majesty asks and requires a great deal of me," cried Frederick William, with flashing eyes and cheeks flushed with anger. "More than a prince dare give, who has to act not merely in subjection and dependence, but as Sovereign of his people. It seems to me as if no one had cause to interfere in this affair of Count Adolphus Schwarzenberg, for it concerns the interior interests of my realm. Within the limits of my own country I alone am lord and ruler, and only one lord there is, before whom I bow, and whom I recognize as my superior—*the law!* Law is properly supreme within the Brandenburg provinces, and shall and must reign over high and low! But my favor, sir, my favor, can only flow spontaneously from within, and can not be arbitrarily bestowed even at an Emperor's behest. I have not withdrawn my favor from Count Adolphus Schwarzenberg, for he never possessed it. Law and right alone must decide for or against him. Many of my subjects have brought accusations against him, and for these I am pledged to procure justice at the hands of the courts of justice. What was done in my lands must be also judged in my lands, else my subjects might be wounded in their sense of right; and to assign this suit to the imperial court at Vienna would be in the highest degree derogatory to the Electoral power and jurisdiction. I can not therefore gratify his Imperial Majesty in this wish.† As concerns his right to the place of grand master,

* See von Orlich, History of Prussia, vol. i, p. 61.

† The Elector's own words.

that appointment belongs not to me, but to the members of the order. They, however, will not elect the young count, and I can not compel them to do so. Lastly, as regards the estates claimed by the heir of the Stadtholder in the Mark, his title to them is wanting, and, moreover, there are no accounts to prove that the money for which the estates were mortgaged was ever used by the Stadtholder for my father's benefit. Besides, even if such contracts existed, they were entered into without the consent of the States, and consequently by the laws of the land were null and void. This is the reply I have to make to the imperial envoy, of which I can alter and abate nothing, however I may deplore any apparent disrespect to his Imperial Majesty's wishes. Return to Vienna, Dr. Gebhard, return with your associate and *attaché*, and repeat to the Emperor what I have said to you. You are dismissed, gentlemen."

"Your Electoral Highness will pardon me for venturing to add one more word," said Count Martinitz, "but I am empowered to do so by the imperial order. The Emperor Ferdinand commisioned me in his own handwriting, in case that your highness refused to accede to the demands made by Dr. Gebhard——"

"Demands?" broke in the Elector. "I did not hear Dr. Gebhard make use of any such term. Mention was made only of imperial wishes and requests. You mean that in case I do not grant Dr. Gebhard's requests—— Proceed, Count Martinitz."

"I am in that case commissioned to desire your highness in the Emperor's name to grant a private audience to the *attaché* of the imperial embassy, the Emperor's privy counselor and chamberlain, Count Adolphus von Schwarzenberg, as he wishes to make an important and confidential communication to your highness."

Frederick William's piercing eyes were fixed with a questioning expression upon the count's face, whose eyes returned the look with a bold and steady gaze.

"You presume greatly upon the respect I owe the Emperor," said the Elector after a pause. "I have wished to regard you hitherto merely as a piece of paper hallowed by the

Emperor's superscription. But now you voluntarily step forth from behind the protecting paper, and present yourself to me as a man, a self-dependent individual, who is responsible for his words and actions. Consider well what you risk, sir, and take my advice: retreat, while yet there is time! Ask me not to look upon you as you actually are, but be content, inasmuch as in you I respect the Emperor's safe conduct. Reflect once again, and then speak!"

"Your Electoral Highness," said the count after a pause, "the Emperor has condescended to request a secret audience for me of your grace. I entreat your highness to grant it to me."

"You desire it? Be it so, then!" cried the Elector. "You, gentlemen, Count von Martinitz and Dr. Gebhard, are dismissed. Count Schwarzenberg may remain. For the Emperor's sake I am ready to grant him the secret audience. Take your leave, gentlemen! Your audience is at an end!"

The two gentlemen bowed low and withdrew. The Elector followed them with his eyes until the door closed behind them. Then he slowly turned his head toward Count Schwarzenberg.

"Speak now," he ordered coldly and severely. "Say what you have to say, but weigh well each word, and take heed of rousing my wrath, for I tell you the measure of my patience and forbearance is well-nigh exhausted! What would you have of me? What do you want?"

"Justice, your highness, justice! Enter into no contest with me! Take not away from me the estates given in pledge by the Elector George William to my father, which have not yet been redeemed. Acknowledge me as the Grand Master of the Knights of St. John, graciously nominate me Stadtholder in the Mark, and I swear to you that I shall be your faithful and devoted servant, your mediator with Emperor and empire! You see, your highness, I ask for nothing but justice!"

"Justice!" repeated Frederick William, while with flashing eyes he approached one step nearer the count. "Beware of reminding me that I have not exercised justice toward you! Ask it not, for then I must needs summon a guard and have

you arrested! Then must I call a court-martial, have you tried, and see you mount the scaffold!"

"The scaffold!" exclaimed the count, turning pale. "But then the Emperor would call you to account for this deed of violence, and——"

"Deed of violence, you call it?" interposed the Elector. "You are mistaken, sir; it would only be a merited punishment! You deserve this punishment, not on account of anything done by your father, although in sooth you bore a full share in his deeds, but on account of your own crime."

"Crime, your highness?"

"Yes, count, crime! You are a conspirator, a rebel! You incited my officers to revolt, entangled them in a conspiracy, and when I would have brought you to judgment you fled like a cowardly woman."

"Your highness!" screamed the count, "I beseech you, weigh your words, provoke me not too much! Otherwise I might forget the respect due you."

"And if you should venture, I have ample means of leading you back to the proper bounds, of forcing you to respect me, to fall down in the dust, and plead for pardon! Do you know what you are? Do you know what you were?"

"What I was I know," cried the count. "I was the favored lover of your sister, Princess Charlotte Louise!"

"Ah! Now at last you drop your mask, now you show your real face. The face of a slanderer, a liar! For you utter a falsehood. You calumniate the virtue of a noble lady, and boast of a favor you never received."

"I speak the truth, your highness, and am in a condition to prove it. Princess Charlotte Louise gave me her favor, and went further than was seemly for a modest maiden. She volunteered to grant me a rendezvous impelled by ardent love."

"That is not true."

"It is true, sir, and I can prove it! I have the writing with me, in which your sister invites me to a rendezvous in the castle at Berlin. She wrote it with her own hand, and signed it with her name. Until now, no one has known the secret, and no one shall know it if we can agree."

"We agree?"

"Yes, your highness, *we!* Your sister's letter is well worth what I ask. I demand nothing but my rights. Leave me my estates, acknowledge me as grand master, appoint me my father's successor, give me the hand of Princess Charlotte Louise."

"My sister's hand to *you?*"

"To me, for I have a right to that hand. The Princess engaged herself to me, and granted me favors."

"Wretched man, to boast of them!" interrupted the Elector.

"She appointed a meeting with me to take place by night," continued the count quietly. "Your honor would be destroyed if any one knew of this. Let me keep it intact! Give me your sister's hand! For I tell you if you do not the world shall hear of this *faux pas* on the part of the Princess. I shall publicly expose the letter she wrote to me, and a laugh of scorn will pursue both you and her through the whole of Germany! Give me your sister's hand!"

"Were you the Emperor himself I would not give her to you. And if you were in a position to defame my whole house, I would not give her to you! And were my sister to fall at my feet weeping at my refusal, I would not give her to you! Yes, and if I knew that my lands and wealth would be doubled by this marriage, I would *never* give my sister to you! I asked you just now if you knew what you were and what you are. To the first question you replied that you were my sister's lover. Now I will tell you what you are: you are the son of a poisoner and a murderer!"

"Sir!" screamed the count, bounding forward in fury and with a sudden movement drawing his dagger from its sheath —"sir, you assail my father in his grave, I will defend him! You owe me satisfaction for this insult! It is not the Elector who stands before me, but a man who has wounded my honor, and I demand satisfaction. You dare not refuse it, or——"

"Or you will complete your father's work, will you? Will hire murderers to do what you dare not attempt yourself? Oh, you may very probably find a second Gabriel Nietzel, whom you may goad on to crime, profiting by his agony and dis-

tress of mind to change a thoughtless deceiver into a poisoner! Do not stare at me in such amazement, as if you understood not my words! You know Gabriel Nietzel well, and your dagger would not have fallen from your hand if your conscience had not struck it down!"

"I know nothing of Gabriel Nietzel!" cried the count, "I only know that you have called my father a murderer and——"

"And, I did wrong in this, for certainly the murderous deed miscarried! *I* live! And *he* was forced to die. Do you know of what your father died?"

"Of grief, and the humiliations which you prepared for him!"

"No, he died of remorse. A stroke, they say, put an end to his life. Yes, it was conscience that smote him to the earth. Gabriel Nietzel stood before him and reminded him of his deeds, demanding of him his wife, whom your father murdered because she saved my life!"

"Horrible!" muttered the count, with sunken head and downcast eyes.

"Yes, horrible!" repeated the Elector. "Gabriel Nietzel was the avenging sword sent from on high for your father's punishment. He, the unhappy one, himself confessed his crime to me, and I have forgiven him. I will forgive your father also, for he stands before a higher tribunal, and *He* who tries the heart, will reward him according to his deeds. But I am your judge, and your deeds accuse you before me! I could have you arrested and tried, and, believe me, I would do so, despite the imperial safe conduct, behind which you have ensconced yourself, but I honor in you the memory of my father, who loved yours, and would not have the world discover how shamefully the magnanimous heart of George William was deceived. Regarding the property you claim from me, let the law decide; regarding the military title you aspire to, let the knights of the order decide; but regarding the accusation which you bring against my sister, and the offer you make me on her account, the Princess alone is the proper person to consult. You shall speak with her this very hour, for I would not have your vain heart puffed up with the

idea that the Princess loves you, and that it is only my tyranny which separates you from her. No, you shall speak with the Princess herself, and she shall decide the question between you. And that you may not suppose that I have influenced my sister, you shall speak to her before I communicate with her myself."

He took the handbell and rang; a page appeared. "Request her Electoral Grace the Princess Charlotte Louise to have the kindness to come to me."

"Your Electoral Grace," said the page, "Colonel von Burgsdorf has just come into the antechamber, and urgently insists upon my announcing him to your grace."

"Admit him and call the Princess. When the gracious young lady has entered the antechamber, let me know. Admit the colonel."

"Here I am, your highness, here I am!" cried Conrad von Burgsdorf, coming in with hasty steps. "I am just from Berlin, and bring my dearest lord good news, and—— But what is that?" interrupted he, fixing his lively gray eyes upon Count Schwarzenberg, who, pale and visibly disconcerted, had withdrawn into one of the window niches.

For one moment Burgsdorf stood still, as if bewildered by the unexpected sight, then he sprang forward like a tiger, and laid his hands like iron claws upon the count's shoulders.

"In the name of the Elector and the law, I arrest you Count Schwarzenberg!" he shrieked.

"Let him go, Burgsdorf," commanded Frederick William.

"No, gracious sir," cried Burgsdorf, "I can not, must not let him go. I must hold fast to my prisoner until I have put him in a safe prison. If I take my hands off him, he will surely find some mousehole to creep through. I know the fine gentleman, and have had experience of his mouselike nature. I thought I had him safe at Berlin, imprisoned in his own palace, and sentinels stationed everywhere. A man could not have escaped, but a mouse can find a hole to retire to almost anywhere. Master Mousy here slipped off through an underground passage. Fortunately I had stationed a couple of spies in front of the park, and one of them came to inform me that they had seen two suspicious personages issue from

the park, while the other dogged their footsteps. I flew to horse, and, thinking that the young count would make for Spandow, raced with my men to the Spandow Gate. Exactly, they had just fled on before. We gave them chase. Huzza! that was a hunt! Already I thought I had the fugitives within my reach, and stretched out my hand to grasp them, when they galloped into the fortress, the gate was shut, and I stood baffled on the outside, and had my mortification increased by hearing Colonel Rochow's mocks and jeers from the wall above. And now when I can take my revenge, when I at last have my prisoner trapped and caught, now, your highness commands me to let him go. No, your highness, it is impossible; for trust me, as soon as I let him go he will find his way to some mousehole. I arrest you in the name of the Elector and the law, Count John Adolphus von Schwarzenberg!"

"Burgsdorf!" cried the Elector in a commanding tone, "once more, I command you to let him go, and come here. Obey without delay!"

The colonel muttered between his teeth a few wild words of wrath, but released the count, and with bowed head and chagrined air slunk toward the Elector.

"You treat me like a well-trained pointer, your highness!" he growled. "You whistle for me, and I drop the prey which you would not have me keep."

"You do yourself too much honor, old Burgsdorf," said the Elector, smiling. "A well-trained pointer does not follow a false scent, and that was what you were doing just now. Did you expect to find a fugitive in your master's cabinet? You thought that this was Count John Adolphus Schwarzenberg, whom I was compelled to arraign as a criminal, and who, in his consciousness of guilt, took refuge from trial in flight. Look closely at what is in the window niche and acknowledge that you were mistaken, and that it is not Count Adolphus Schwarzenberg."

Colonel Burgsdorf, perfectly bewildered, gazed with wide-open eyes first on the Elector and then on the count, who returned his stare with a scornful smile.

"Most gracious sir," he then cried, "my head is not clear

enough to discern your meaning, and I stick to it: that is Count Adolphus Schwarzenberg, my escaped prisoner."

"And I repeat it, you are mistaken, your old eyes deceive you! Look once more right sharply and closely, and you will perceive your error and comprehend that this is not Count Adolphus Schwarzenberg, to whom I could never have granted an audience in my cabinet. Only look closer and you will see, old Burgsdorf, that there is nought in the window niche but a great sheet of parchment, inscribed with manifold characters, furnished with the seal of the empire, and signed by the Emperor Ferdinand's own hand. I know that you do not read with ease, and therefore will tell you what is marked on this parchment, and what it means. It means a safe conduct, and the Emperor himself has written upon it that this parchment must be held in honor and sacred from all attack."

"Ah!" cried the colonel—"ah! I begin to understand now."

"Well truly that is a fortunate circumstance," said the Elector, smiling.

"Yes, your highness," repeated Burgsdorf, "I begin to understand. Let me examine the thing narrowly once again."

He covered his eyes with his hand, as if he were blinded by a ray of light, and again stared at the window niche.

"Yes, indeed," he said slowly—"yes, I see it quite plainly and distinctly now. Yes, that is no man, but a veritable piece of parchment, and I recognize, too, the imperial seal and the Emperor's handwriting. Where were my eyes that I did not see it from the first, and what a stupid fool I was to suppose that I saw a man there! What misfortune would have ensued if I had defaced the Emperor's handwriting or broken the seal, perhaps!"

"It would have been a wrong done to Imperial Majesty itself," smiled the Elector, "and might have brought me under the ban of the empire, or perhaps produced a war."

"Good heavens! a war about an ass's hide," exclaimed Burgsdorf, with an expression of horror.

"Surely, your highness," shrieked the count, stepping forth from his place of retirement, pale and trembling with

passion, "you can not ask me any longer to submit in silence to such gross insults."

"Gracious sir," asked Burgsdorf, "may the ass's hide speak? May a piece of parchment, merely because hallowed by the Emperor's signature, venture to leave its place and threaten?"

"Hush, Burgsdorf! And you, sir, step back into your recess, stay in the place pointed out to you, and wait."

"Learn to wait!" cried Burgsdorf. "Oh, gracious sir, that is the very window niche in which I was once forced to stand in order to learn to wait. I thank you, gracious sir, for in this hour you give me my revenge. Now it is for my enemy to learn; and I beseech Your Grace to give me leave to open my budget from Berlin. The parchment must hear it and learn. Oh, I know how it feels to have to listen in silence to have to learn to wait!"

"Colonel Conrad von Burgsdorf," said the Elector with majesty, "you are here to bring me tidings from Berlin. Speak out and be assured that no one will venture to interrupt you. In the first place, have you executed my orders?"

"Yes, gracious sir, according to the best of my abilities and the means at my disposal."

"As their superior officer, have you required an oath of allegiance to me from the commandants and garrisons of the forts?"

"I sent your orders everywhere, requiring the commandants to swear their men into service in your name, and to come to Berlin that I might administer the same oath to themselves."

"And have they done so? Have my officers and troops sworn to serve me faithfully?"

"A few commandants have done so, but Kracht, Rochow, and Goldacker have refused, declaring that they would rather blow their fortresses up than swear fealty to the Elector. Hereupon I forthwith had the commandant of Berlin, Colonel von Kracht, arrested, and would have proceeded in like manner against the Commandants von Rochow and von Goldacker, but the traitors got wind of my intentions. Goldacker

left Brandenburg with thirty horse, and, report says, went over to the Imperialists. Colonel von Rochow, however, in his fortress assumed a warlike attitude, and gave out that he was ready to do battle with the enemy to the death. Meanwhile Margrave Ernest conferred with him under a flag of truce, and the committee of investigation at Berlin diligently prosecuted their labors, and brought to light heinous offenses committed by the two colonels and Count John Adolphus von Schwarzenberg."

"Do you know the particulars? The colonels were accused of cheating and embezzlement, were they not?"

"Yes," said Burgsdorf with a little embarrassment, "the question regards the payment of the troops enlisted, for which the colonels received money, and——and——"

"And yet the men were not enlisted," said the Elector, with an imperceptible smile. "Had they done nothing more than this, I would have pardoned them; if they had shown themselves in other respects true and faithful, and repented of their folly."

"But this they have by no means done!" cried Burgsdorf eagerly. "They have rather shown themselves to be obstinate and untoward. Goldacker has been extorting bonds in Fürstenwald, plundering whole villages, and putting the magistrates in chains, because they would not say that Goldacker gave the press money to the young fellows of the village, although these had not made their appearance. Colonel von Rochow put the clerk of his muster roll in irons, and had him condemned to the gallows by a court-martial, because the poor fellow would not bear false witness and swear that the colonel had made payments to him. When the Stadtholder demanded the clerk's release, Colonel von Rochow insolently refused to give him up, and now the margrave ordered me to arrest him. But von Rochow did as his accomplices—he fled and made his escape to the Imperialists."

"Let the Imperialists keep Goldacker and Rochow," said the Elector. "I would have them know that I from this time forth cheerfully resign their services, and yield them up with good grace to the Emperor and empire. With these two, therefore, we have done. Tell me now, how the Schwarzenberg

affair stands. We gave orders that in due time the papers found in the palace of the deceased count should be sealed and handed over to the committee of investigation. Was this done, and has it perhaps been made evident from the examination of the papers, that the son of the Stadtholder was innocent of complicity in the intrigues of his father and friends, and been falsely accused by us?"

"On the contrary, your highness, it was proved that Count John Adolphus had conspired, not merely with the rebellious officers, but with other persons not subjects of your highness. Among the papers of the old count was found the young gentleman's secret correspondence. It was in cipher, it is true, but there are very learned men on the committee of investigation, and they discovered the key, and were able to read the letters. Oh, most gracious sir, all your faithful servants were shamefully slandered and calumniated in these letters. Your highness even was not spared, and the young gentleman expressly wrote that he would do all he possibly could to effect the downfall of the Elector Frederick William. Of the States, he said that they were almost all friends of the Swedes and foes of the Emperor, and, above all, he represented me, Conrad von Burgsdorf, as a bitter enemy to the Emperor, and said that on that account all orders came to me. But the States will complain to the Emperor that the rebellious slanderer, Count Schwarzenberg, has blackened them so abominably and accused them of high treason."

"They can do so," said the Elector—"they can call the slanderer to account, and you can do so too, Burgsdorf, if it seems necessary to you."

"But it does not seem at all necessary to me, your highness," cried the colonel. "I have only one master, yourself, and if I had injured your grace I should have been guilty of high treason. Henceforth I shall be nothing but the most devoted and diligent servant of my dear young lord and Elector, and I care very little about Schwarzenberg's having aspersed me to the Emperor if I am only blessed with your favor."

"I have recognized you as a true and faithful servant," said the Elector kindly, "and I am no ingrate. You shall ex-

perience this hereafter, for I shall find means to reward my old friend as he deserves!"

"Your highness, you have rewarded me already," cried Burgsdorf—"you have called me your friend, my Elector, and I thank you out of a full heart."

The Elector nodded. "In time all the world shall learn that I honor and esteem you as my friend," he said. "But now tell me, what progress has been made in quieting the refractory soldiery in the Mark? Have you begun that difficult task?"

"We have begun, your highness, and will also end, although at first there was much insubordination and mutiny, and although the cart had been driven so deep into the mire that we could not have drawn it out altogether without great difficulty, even if there had been more of us."

The door of the antechamber opened, and the page made his appearance.

"In accordance with your highness's request, the Princess has entered the antechamber."

"Beg the young lady to wait a moment. I will come directly to conduct her grace into my cabinet."

"Burgsdorf," said the Elector, turning to the colonel, "go up now, and pay your respects to my mother. You can tell her what is going on at Berlin. Her grace will hear you gladly, for she takes great interest in the cities of Berlin and Cologne."

"Very curious stories I can tell the Electress, since your highness accords me that permission!" cried the colonel. "Many thrilling affairs have happened, and——"

"Go now, my friend," said the Elector, pointing to the door through which Burgsdorf had entered. Then he crossed over to the opposite end of the apartment himself and opened the door of the inner room.

XI.—Meeting and Parting.

"Be kind enough to come in, dear sister," said the Elector, standing in the doorway and smilingly greeting the Princess, who now entered the apartment.

"I have come at your bidding, Frederick," said the Princess, accepting her brother's proffered hand, and looking up at him with a sweet, affectionate smile.

In the window niche stood John Adolphus Schwarzenberg, and the fires of passion and resentment burned in the glance which he fixed upon the Princess, whom he now saw for the first time after a lapse of three years. How much pain and mortification had he not suffered during these three years on her account? The only change wrought in the Princess by the flight of time was a more perfect development of beauty and of grace of carriage. The count heaved a deep, painful sigh, and the rage of despair took possession of his soul at the sight of that noble, tranquil countenance.

"She has not suffered," he said to himself. "She never loved me, and will now despise me!"

"Forgive me, sister, for troubling you to come to me," said Frederick William, nodding affectionately to the Princess. "I ought indeed to have come to you, but I wished to speak with you on a matter strictly confidential, which I did not wish our mother and sister to know anything about."

"Is it really a secret, then?" asked Charlotte Louise—"no bad secret, I hope, Frederick?"

"It at least touches very grave matters," replied the Elector. "Look yonder at that window niche."

The Princess turned quickly, and looked in the direction indicated. A low scream escaped her lips, and she sank trembling upon a seat.

"Adolphus!" murmured her quivering lips.

This single utterance spoke more eloquently to both men than the most elaborate arrangement of sentences could have done. It told them that years of separation had not estranged the Princess from Count Schwarzenberg; that her heart still called him by the familiar name accorded him by love; that

with the count, Charlotte Louise was not the proud Princess, but only the humble, loving maiden. The Elector understood this, and a cloud overshadowed his brow.

The count understood it, too, and his dark countenance brightened. With uplifted head he rushed from the window niche to the Princess, and, kneeling before her, seized her hand to press it to his lips. But this touching of her hand seemed to restore to the Princess her strength and self-possession. By a hasty movement she released her hand and rose.

"Brother," she said, "is it customary to greet princesses in this style? Be pleased to tell me, for you know I have been but little in the world, and am, therefore, but little conversant with its forms."

"No, Louise, it is not customary," replied Frederick William, breathing more freely; "but Count Schwarzenberg seems to suppose, that as your favored lover he need not regard the laws of ceremony."

"As my favored lover?" asked the Princess, a blush suddenly suffusing her brow and neck, while her blue eyes, usually so soft, sparkled with indignation. "Did I hear aright? Did you actually say that to *me*, brother, to your sister? Did you call this or any other man my favored lover?"

"I only repeated the words made use of by Count John Adolphus von Schwarzenberg in suing for your hand, sister. This gentleman affirms that you have granted him more favor than was seemly in a modest maiden. And when I doubted it he replied that he could prove it, for he possessed a note, written with your own hand, in which you invited him to a rendezvous by night."

"He said that!" cried the Princess. "He said that, and you did not kill him on the spot?"

"I did not kill him," answered the Elector gravely and solemnly, "because no one should die for the truth. And he maintains that he speaks the truth: that by means of this letter of yours he can dishonor you and my house in the eyes of the whole world. Say then, Louise, is it true; does he actually possess such a letter?"

Charlotte Louise shuddered and tottered backward.

"Yes!" she breathed—"yes, he speaks the truth—he does possess such a letter!"

"No!" cried the count, "he did not speak the truth! Oh, forgive me, Princess, forgive me this slander, which my lips uttered, uttered in the delirium of pain, love, and despair! I lied, Princess, you never wrote to me, never! I said that in order to force your brother to give me your hand, because I love you, Princess, you know not how dearly! Ah! you little imagine with what fervor of devotion my soul clung to you, and what you did that time when you mocked and betrayed me, treating me like a despised beggar! That hour wrought a change in my whole nature! The most sacred blossoms of my love had been crushed by you, and I trampled them under foot and strove to bury my despair in mirth and pleasure. I did not succeed. The sacred old song of the buried love was forever making itself heard in low, sweet strains. I would not listen, I tried to drown it. I became a conspirator, a rebel, for I longed to take vengeance upon you and your house. Fate was against me; my revenge constituting my punishment. I must flee, I must leave as a fugitive the land in which you live. The Emperor received me graciously, giving me rank and titles, and bestowing upon me marks of favor and regard, thus opening to the ambitious heart a career of fame, dignity, and honor. All was in vain, though. I felt too late that love, not ambition, had urged me into the dangerous paths of insurrection and revolt. I could not forget you. Like a radiant star, you ever shone upon the midnight darkness of my soul. I must see you again, to obtain from your own lips my sentence of pardon or condemnation. I despised all danger, even the order of arrest issued against me, and obtained the Emperor's leave to accompany his ambassador here. I came and suffered the severest mortification that a man can suffer. I subjected myself to your brother's scorn and contempt. Then at last my heart rebelled, and when he scornfully refused your hand to me, I claimed it as my right, by virtue of the love you once vowed to me. The Elector disputed your love for me, and then, in the rage of my heart, I boasted of a favor which I never received, boasted of having received from you a letter, and an invitation to a rendezvous. Oh, forgive the

madman who kneels here at your feet and suffers the agony of death. He has no right to claim anything, he only implores from you an act of grace!"

While the count thus spoke in passionate excitement, the Elector had slowly retired, and, standing apart with folded arms, gazed upon the couple with melancholy eyes. In the beginning the Princess had sunk upon a chair, with bowed head and hanging arms, pale as a drooping lily. But the glowing words which fell upon her ear seemed to find an echo, a painful echo, in her heart. Slowly she raised her head, and breathlessly listened to his words, while the color once more mounted to her cheek. When the count stopped, she slowly rose and proudly and indignantly drew herself erect.

"You speak falsely now, Count Schwarzenberg," she said, "for what you told my brother was true. Yes, three years ago, in the childish folly of my heart, I granted you a favor unseemly for a modest maiden. Yes, I wrote you a note with my own hand, inviting you to a rendezvous in the castle at nine o'clock in the evening. Brother, I confess this, although I know that I am thereby forever forfeiting your esteem. But this man has accused me, and I honor the past of my heart, while I acknowledge the fault of which he accuses me. Yes, I have loved him, warmly, inexpressibly, and have wept and lamented him in a manner little becoming a princess, but in my love I was only a poor simple maiden, who wanted nothing in the whole world but his heart. Well I know that I sinned grievously against my mother and the laws of virtue and propriety in carrying on a clandestine love affair, in allowing my heart to be deceived by his ardent protestations of love and even in my delusion going so far as to grant him a rendezvous—nay, even to ask for one."

"Did you really do that, sister?"

"I did, and have repented it for three long years. That I confess this, that I reveal my secret, should prove to you that I now speak the truth. And therefore you will believe me, Frederick William, when I affirm that this is the only favor of which the count can boast. I have to blush before you, but not before him."

"Not before me either, Louise," said the Elector. "I

know love, and in my own heart have battled with all its follies and illusions. I know what you suffer, by remembering my own experiences. It is a bitter grief to be obliged to admit that you have wasted the holiest feelings of your heart upon an unworthy object."

"Yes indeed, it is a bitter grief," sighed the Princess.

"O Princess! spare yourself this grief!" cried the count, still kneeling before her. "You have freely owned that you love me. Why, then, will you turn away from me? Accept me as your husband, and I will love you, serve you, obey you, ask nothing but the privilege of looking upon you, and basking in your presence."

She gave him a long, cold look. "And if I decline your hand, you will revenge yourself, will you not, by displaying my note to the Emperor and the whole world, you will defame me and all my house? Was not that your threat?"

"I spoke in frenzy, in despair. But you shall see that I will ask nothing from you for fear, but all for love. See, here is the note. I have hitherto preserved it as my most precious jewel; my father bade me do so, and told me that this paper might save me in the hour of greatest peril. This hour is now at hand, but I will not have it save me. Here is the note; I offer it to you. Take it, tear it up, and then decide!"

With outstretched hands he held out the paper, but she took it not, and quickly stepped back.

"Keep the paper," she said. "Why should I ask whether you will turn it into a weapon against me? I will accept no favor or advantage from you. Only let it be known at the imperial court, to the whole world, that I loved you; show this paper everywhere, and all will turn from you, all women will despise you, and all men blush for the traitor to love!"

"No one shall despise me, no one shall turn from me!" cried the count, springing to his feet. With trembling hands he tore the paper into little bits, and threw them on the floor.

"There lies the secret, Princess! Now I am entirely in your power! Now I have no weapon of defense. Call Burgsdorf, your highness, have me arrested, if it seems good to you.

I renounce the Emperor's safe conduct, as I just now renounced your sister's letter."

"We accept no act of generosity or renunciation from you," replied the Elector with dignity. "The Emperor's safe conduct I shall respect, and as I allowed you to speak quietly to my sister, although you misrepresented much and put matters in a false light, so I will allow you to depart unmolested. As regards the love letter, your excuse for demanding my sister's hand, the fragments testify as strongly against you as the letter itself. My sister alone has to reply to your offer."

"I have no answer to give this man, for he dare not ask anything more of me," said the Princess proudly. "He who can betray the secrets of the heart degrades himself. The man who boasts of a favor received is unworthy of it, and every woman will despise him. Not merely now, in the hour of danger, have you bethought yourself of my letter, Count Adolphus Schwarzenberg, but you had spoken of it previously to your father. You have turned a young girl's letter into a political bond, which, as a cunning merchant, was to be redeemed and converted into money. Now you have redeemed it; there lies the letter! I give you for it my contempt."

"I think you have now received my sister's answer," said the Elector, "and we have nothing more to say to one another, for the courts must settle other subjects of dispute between us. Go, Count Schwarzenberg, return home to Vienna, for your mission is ended. You are dismissed."

The count answered not a word. One long glance of grief and rage he cast upon the Princess, who stood loftily erect at her brother's side. Then, with a slight bow of salutation, he turned and strode through the room.

Not a sound interrupted the solemn silence save the count's footsteps as he advanced to the door. There he once more paused and turned back his livid, wrathful countenance. The Princess still stood erect, calm, and unmoved, beside the Elector. Schwarzenberg cast down his eyes and left the room. The Princess heard the door shut, and a heavy sigh escaped her breast. "He has gone," she murmured softly, "he has gone; I shall never see him again."

She leaned her head upon her brother's shoulder and wept bitterly.

"You loved him very dearly, then?" asked the Elector gently, throwing his arms around her neck.

"Yes," she whispered softly, "I loved him dearly, and I am afraid I love him still, and will mourn for him forever. No one on earth has mortified me so deeply as he, and yet I shall never love another as I have loved him."

"Poor child," said Frederick William sadly, "you love him still, although you despise him!"

With folded arms he walked several times to and fro, while his sister dropped into a chair, covered her face with her hands, and quietly wept. The Elector stopped in front of her and gently drew her hands from before her face.

"Sister," he said tenderly, "I will dry your tears, for I may do so, and in this hour of most sacred confidence not the shadow of an untruth shall lie between us. When you wrote that billet to the count three years ago he did not come to the rendezvous, did he?"

"No!" cried the Princess; "he dared to let me expect him in vain, to decline the interview which I had granted him. O Frederick! when I think of this I could die for very shame, so much do I hate him who humiliated me so deeply, so much do I despise myself for having incurred and merited this humiliation."

"Louise," said the Elector softly, "if that is your only reason for hating him, then you can love him again, for this is probably the only fault of which he is innocent. Lift up your head, sister, for I can relieve you from this humiliation. It was Count Schwarzenberg's wish to keep the appointment. He stood for two hours before a locked door seeking admission. I, however, stood on the other side of the door, guarding it, and did not depart until he had gone away in despair."

"You, brother?" asked the Princess, whose cheeks grew suddenly crimson. "You knew about it? You prevented the interview?"

"I wanted to guard my sister against her own indiscretion; I wanted to preserve her from error."

"You knew it and kept silence, magnanimously kept my

secret from my mother? Oh, and *he* is innocent? He did not scorn and insult me? I can think of him without anger, without—— No, no; forgive me, brother, I——"

"Hear me, Louise," said he softly. "I will prove to you how much I have your happiness at heart, and how gladly I would promote it. If in spite of all that you have learned to-day, in spite of his mode of wooing, you still love Count Schwarzenberg—so love him that for his sake you can forever —mark well my words, *forever*—give up mother, brother and sister, home, country, yea, religion itself, sundering all the ties which bind you here—if you so love him that he is family, home, everything to you, then tell me so, sister, and I will overcome my repugnance and have the count recalled, will accept his offer, and bestow you upon him in marriage. Only you must choose between him and us. In that hour, when I join your hands, we have seen each other for the last time, and never will your return home be possible. But if you really love him, go, for well I know that love only finds its home in the heart of the beloved one. Choose then, sister. Will you follow him? Speak, I shall not reproach you—speak, and I will have him recalled!"

She flung her arms around his neck and gently laid her head upon his breast. "No," she said softly—"no, do not call him back. He has betrayed and desecrated love. My heart revolts from him and turns with deep affection to you. Thank you, brother, for acquainting me with the truth and taking that weight of humiliation from my soul. Now I shall be comforted, now I can hold up my head again. I am not the rejected, but the rejecter. Yes, brother, I have renounced love and happiness. The golden morning dream is over, and I am awake! Let me weep, Frederick, my last tears for a lost love!"

The Elector bent over her and imprinted a kiss upon her brow. "Weep, sister, weep," he said softly. "And if it can in any degree console you, know that I have wept and suffered as you do now."

XII.—The Investiture at Warsaw.

At last all matters of dispute were settled, all difficulties smoothed over. King Wladislaus of Poland had declared himself ready to receive the oath of allegiance from his vassal the Elector of Brandenburg, and to invest him with the duchy of Prussia. Hard conditions, truly, were those imposed upon the young Elector, and heavy the sacrifices which the King and, more pressingly yet, the members of the Polish Diet required. That the Elector should pay a yearly tribute of thirty thousand florins, besides a hundred thousand florins from the naval taxes, was a condition to which he had agreed without a struggle; but much severer and more humbling compliances he had to make.

They wished to make him feel that the King of Poland was still lord paramount of Prussia, and that the Elector must give way to him. The nobility of Prussia were therefore to have the right, in all civil and difficult cases, to appeal from the decision of the Elector to that of the King. On the other hand, the Elector was not, without the King's express permission, to occupy a neutral position with regard to any enemy of Poland; he was to receive the King's commissioners whenever it pleased the latter to send them to inspect the fortresses of Memel and Pillau. But the hardest thing was, that the Elector must pledge himself to protect and exalt the Roman Catholic worship in Prussia with all his might, and to do nothing for the further spread of the Reformed Church in Prussia. He was to build up the decaying Catholic Church at Königsberg, and, besides that, have a new one built. The Catholics were to be protected in the free exercise of their worship, and guarded against every attack of the Protestant preachers.

Hard and degrading were these conditions, but the Elector had accepted them. He had bowed his proud heart and constrained it to be humble. Tears of indignation had stood in his eyes as they handed him the document on which were inscribed all these conditions; his hand had trembled when he took the pen, but still he had appended his signature, and

none but Burgsdorf had seen the tears which fell from Frederick William's eyes upon his hand as he signed.

"Burgsdorf," he said, pointing to his signature, "do you know what I have written there?"

"No, your highness, that I do not. I am not stupid enough to give myself much trouble deciphering the scratches of a pen. But I know and have read what is written upon your face, sir."

"Well, and what stands written there, old friend?"

"Most gracious sir, it is written there that you suffer now, but will be revenged hereafter. It says that you now in a submissive manner offer your hand to the insolent, cursed Pole, but that on some future day you will shake your fist in his face, and amply requite his haughty arrogance."

"Well done; you have read correctly," exclaimed the Elector, laughing. "You have divined my most secret thoughts."

"And may a good God only deign to grant me this one favor, that I may live long enough to see your thoughts put in action, gracious sir! May he preserve me from gout and paralysis, that I, too, may have a hand in the deeds of that blessed day, and strike a few well-aimed blows."

"Well, it is to hoped that not many years will elapse ere the dawning of that day," said the Elector. "I shall not know ease or rest until it is here, and I can have my revenge. Let us think of this, old friend, and be meekly patient and wear a placid mien on our way to Warsaw, to humble ourselves. You know a man must sometimes swallow bitter medicine when he is sick and faint, and the bitterest will appear sweet if he drinks it in order to imbibe new life and health. My poor country is, indeed, sick unto death, and therefore I go to Warsaw to swallow a bitter pill for the health and salvation of my land. But we go on crutches, two hard crutches."

"I know the names of those crutches, your highness," said Burgsdorf. "One crutch is called 'Imperial,' the other 'Polish.'"

"You have guessed correctly, old friend," answered the Elector. "But some day we will throw aside the crutches on which we must now lean, and Prussia shall be the sword which

we shall unsheathe and draw against all our foes. I must now submit to having a lord over me, but the time will come when the Prussian black eagle will feel itself strong enough to do battle against the white eagle of Poland, and soar aloft on bold, strong wing. Once more I tell you, old friend, think of that, if we do go now to Warsaw! You are to accompany me, and when you ride into Warsaw at the head of my soldiers, as their colonel and chief, show a smiling visage to the fair Polish women and enchant them by your grace."

"I will so enchant them, your highness," laughed Burgsdorf, "that for rapture at sight of me they will not look at you, and not even make an attempt to win your heart."

"My heart, Burgsdorf?" said the Elector. "I have no heart, at least no personal one. My thoughts and feelings belong only to my country, my ambition, and my future. I now go to Warsaw and bow my head in the dust, that at a later period I may lift it up the more proudly and independently."

And on the 7th of October, 1641, Elector Frederick William of Brandenburg made his entry into Warsaw. At the head of his splendidly equipped regiment rode old Conrad von Burgsdorf, his broad, bloated face flushed crimson, and, as he stroked his long, light moustache, he bowed right and left, saluting the fair ladies, who looked down upon the glittering procession from windows hung with tapestry and decorated with flowers and ribbons. But the fair ladies took but little notice of old Burgsdorf. Their bright eyes were all turned to the handsome young nobleman, who, quite alone, followed the regiment of soldiers. Behind him was seen a brilliant array of gentlemen in handsome uniforms; but all this vanished unnoticed. Only upon *him*, yon youth who rides his horse so proudly and so gracefully, upon him alone were all eyes fixed. How finely his figure was outlined in that closely fitted velvet coat, trimmed with golden "Brandenburgs," and crossed by the golden shoulder belt from which hung his German broadsword. How gracefully fell his long brown hair over his shoulders, how boldly sat upon his head the cocked felt hat, with its crest of black and white ostrich plumes! How fiery and penetrating the glance of those dark-

blue eyes, and how sweet and captivating the smile of those full, fresh lips.

Oh, King's daughter, King's daughter, shield your heart, lest it glow with love for the handsome stranger who now draws near, and whom they call the young Elector of Brandenburg! He looks not at *you*, he thinks not of *you*. But *you*—you look at him and think of him. They have told you that they will wed you to him, that the little Elector will esteem it a great honor to become the husband of a daughter of the King of Poland. Why, she is a princess of imperial blood, for her mother is an archduchess of Austria, a daughter of Emperor Ferdinand I! It will, indeed, be a great honor to the little Elector, if they bestow upon him the hand of a king's daughter, an emperor's grandchild, and happy will he be to be allowed to receive it, and to become great by means of his great connections!

Look closely at him, Princess Hildegarde; look at him with your heart and soul, rejoice in his youth, beauty, and proud bearing, for he is to be your husband! Your father will do him the honor to receive him as his son-in-law, and the Emperor will condescendingly admit him to his relationship! See now he has approached quite near the throne which has been erected upon the square fronting the palace. On the throne sits King Wladislaus in the rich national costume. Beside him stands his brother, Prince Casimir, while to the right and left on the steps of the throne stand the magnates with their insignia of rank, the bishops and prelates. Close behind the throne is the kingly palace, and there, upon a balcony hung with gold brocade, stands the Queen; to the right and left of her the two royal Princesses, both so lovely to look upon in their picturesque Polish garb, their raven tresses surmounted by the Polish cap with its heron's plumes.

Oh, King's daughter, King's daughter, you need not fear, you are so charming, so attractive; surely you will win his heart, and he will woo you not merely from political motives, but from love!

Does he see you, and is he looking up at you? No, he only looks up at the King as he now stands at the foot of the throne, beside that magnificent cushion studded with emeralds and

pearls. His knights and bodyguard range themselves to the right and left of the throne, and reserve a small open space in the midst of the broad square, which is densely thronged by masses of people behind the closed ranks of the soldiers. In this small vacant space stands he, the young Elector of Brandenburg!

High is his head, radiant the glance which he now lifts higher than the King's throne. Looks he at you, Princess Hildegarde, gazes he upon you, fair maiden of a royal line?

No, his glance mounts higher; to heaven itself he raises both eye and thought! He communes with God and the forefathers of his house, who once, like him, stood at the foot of that throne. And he vows before God and his ancestors that he will be the last Hohenzollern to submit to such humiliation and bend the knee as vassal to the Polish King. He will free his land and crown, and be the vassal of none but God alone!

So swore the Elector Frederick William as he stood at the foot of the throne on which sat the Polish King, resplendent with his crown and scepter, and this oath made his countenance beam with joy and his eyes flame with energy and spirit.

Now is heard the flourish of trumpets and kettledrums, and the bell of every tower in Warsaw rings, for the solemn act begins: the Duke of Prussia is to swear allegiance to the King of Poland!

Three cannon thunder from the ramparts! The bells grow dumb, the trumpets and drums are silent! A breathless stillness pervades that spacious square. The people with dark, flashing eyes gaze curiously upon the heretic, the unbeliever, who is to swear fealty to his Catholic Majesty. The Polish deputies look threateningly upon the bold duke, who dared to enter upon the government of Prussia before he had given his oath of allegiance; the papal nuncio turns his head aside with sorrowful looks, and can not bear to see a heretic, an apostate, invested with authority over a Catholic country.

The King, however, smiles good-naturedly, and the ladies from the balcony in the rear kindly incline their heads and blushingly greet the young Elector, who, doffing his plumed hat, gracefully salutes them.

Three senators approach the Elector. One holds out to him the red feudal banner, which the Elector grasps firmly in his right hand. The second offers him the *Juramentum fidelitatis* (oath of fidelity), on which the young Prince is to lay his hands and swear. The third holds in his hand the parchment on which is inscribed the feudal oath. The high chancellor now descends from the steps of the throne and takes the parchment out of the senator's hands. The Elector bends his knee upon the richly embroidered cushion, a crimson glow flushes his cheeks, and deep in his soul he repeats: "I shall be the last Hohenzollern to submit to such humiliation and bow in the dust before another Prince. I shall make my Prussia and Brandenburg great. I shall free them from Emperor and King, and shall own no superior but God! To that end, O Lord, grant me thy blessing, and hear the vow my heart utters while my lips are speaking other words!"

The King waves his golden scepter and the lord chancellor begins with resonant voice to read off the oath of allegiance couched in the Latin tongue.

Loud and clearly the Elector speaks each word after him, loud and clearly his lips pronounce words of which his heart knows nothing. To be a submissive vassal, his lips swear—to fulfill faithfully and obediently all the obligations due from him as Duke of Prussia to the King, as is written in the oath of fealty subscribed by him. How full and strong is his voice, sounding distinctly over all the square, and yet how sweet and harmonious every tone!

Oh, King's daughter, King's daughter, shield your heart! Look not down upon his lustrous eyes, heed not his voice, though it ring like music in your ear! Beware of loving him, for you know not whether his heart inclines toward you!

God be praised! The formula of the oath is ended. The Elector may rise from his knees, and, as he does so, he says to himself: "Never again shall this knee bend to man! Never again shall I endure what I have endured to-day!"

But his countenance betrays nothing of the emotions of his soul, and with a smile upon his lips he ascends the steps of the throne, and takes his place upon a seat at the left hand of the King.

And again are heard the ringing of bells and flourishing of trumpets, as they announce to the city of Warsaw, that the Elector Frederick William has just sworn allegiance to the King of Poland. The solemnity is over, and the King, the Elector, and the nobles of his realm, repair to the palace to partake of a banquet which has been prepared there for them.

A sumptuous banquet! The tables glitter with gold and silver plate, around which are ranged the nobles in their striking national costumes. The Brandenburg officers are arrayed in gold-laced uniforms, and between them sit the beautiful Polish ladies, richly adorned with flowers and sparkling gems, themselves the fairest flowers and their eyes the most brilliant gems. Between the King and Queen sits the young Elector, opposite him the two Princesses.

Oh, King's daughter, shield your heart. He talks with you, indeed, and smiles upon you, and sweet words flutter like butterflies across! Butterflies take speedy flight, sweet words are scattered to the wind! Nothing remains of them but a painful memory! *If* it should be so with you, King's daughter!

The Elector is no longer the humble vassal with serious face and melancholy mien; he is the young ruler, the hero of the future. His eyes glisten, his lips smile, witticisms drop from his mouth, his countenance beams with merriment and youthful joy. Not merely are the ladies delighted with him, but the men also, and the royal pair are glad of heart, for well pleased are they to present such a husband to their amiable daughter.

Not until late at night is the *fête* concluded, and when the Elector goes home to the Brandenburg Palace, all the nobility attend him with torches in their hands—a long procession of five thousand torches! Like a golden flood it streams through the streets of Warsaw, flashes in at all the windows, and inscribes on every wall in shining characters, "The Elector of Brandenburg, Duke of Prussia, has given the oath of vassalage to the King of Poland!"

The *fête* is over, but the next morning ushers in new festivities! To-day the Elector gives a splendid entertainment

to the royal family and the chief nobility. At table the Queen sits on his right hand, on his left Princess Hildegarde, the King's daughter.

The Elector is cheerful and unembarrassed in manner; she is thoughtful, reserved, and silent. She is wont to be so lively and talkative in her girlish innocence. The Elector, however, knows not that her manner is changed. His heart is a stranger to her, and his glances say no more to her than to all other pretty women! In the evening he dances with her at the Queen's ball—that is to say, the Elector dances with the King's daughter, but not the young man with the beautiful young girl.

Will he not propose? The Queen hints at the great honor which they destine for him; the King says tenderly to him that he would esteem himself happy, if he could call so noble a young Prince his son. But the Elector understands neither the Queen nor the King, he is silent and does not propose. He is so modest and diffident—perhaps he dare not. They must wait awhile. If he has not declared himself on the last day of his visit, they must take the initiative and woo him, since he will not woo.

On this last day it is the Princesses who give a ball to the Elector—a splendid masquerade, for which they have been preparing three months, arranging costumes and practicing dances. A half mask is to-day well chosen for the Princess Hildegarde, for it conceals her agitated features, her anxious countenance. She knows that to-day her fate is to be decided! She knows that at the close of this *fête* she is to be betrothed to the Elector of Brandenburg.

Yes, since he will not woo, he must be wooed! The King's daughter, the Emperor's grandchild, is exalted so high over the little Elector, the powerless duke, that he actually can not venture to sue for her hand, but must have his good fortune announced to him.

Count Gerhard von Donhöf is selected by the King to execute this delicate commission, and doubts not that his proposition will be auspiciously received.

He requests of the Elector an interview in the little Chinese pavilion near the conservatory, and with smiling, free, and

cordial manner tells him how much the Queen and King love him.

"And I reciprocate their feelings with all my heart," answers the Elector. "These delightful days, like brilliant stars, will ever live in my remembrance. Tell their Majesties so."

"Your highness should carry home with you a lasting memento of these days," whispered the courtier.

"What mean you, Count Dönhof?"

"I believe that if you were to ask the hand of Princess Hildegarde, their Majesties would cheerfully grant you their consent and bestow upon you a royal bride."

Gravely the Elector shook his head. "No," he said solemnly—"no, Count Donhöf, so long as I can not govern my land in peace, I dare seek no other bride than my own good sword." *

And smilingly, as if he had heard nothing, as if nothing uncommon had happened, the Elector returns to the conservatory.

The Princess Hildegarde also smiles, looks cheerful and happy, and dances with all the cavaliers. But not with the Elector! He does not approach her again.

She seems not to perceive this, and maintains her cheerfulness, even when at last he approaches the Princesses to take leave of them.

"Farewell, Sir Elector! May you have a prosperous journey home and be happy!" So say her lips. What says her heart?

That nobody knows. The Princess has a tender but proud heart! Only at night was heard a low sobbing and wailing in the Princess's chamber. When morning broke though it was hushed. That is the deepest grief which must shun the light of day, and only find vent and expression in the curtained darkness of night.

Poor Hildegarde! Poor King's daughter! Scorned! The Emperor's grandchild scorned by the little Elector of Brandenburg!

He has returned home; he has shaken from his feet the

* The Elector's own words. See von Orlich, History of Prussia, vol. vi, p. 77.

dust of that humbling pilgrimage. The States of the duchy of Prussia had long delayed swearing allegiance to the Elector, feeling that they had been aggrieved as to their rights and privileges. Now at last all difficulties had been adjusted and the deputies of Prussia were ready to do homage to their Duke. Upon an open tribune before the palace stood the Elector, with bared head and radiant countenance, and in front of him at the foot of the throne the deputies from his duchy. They swore faithfulness and devotion, and, as in Warsaw, so in Königsberg the bells rang, and trumpets and drums sent forth triumphant sounds. The roar of cannon announced to Königsberg and all Prussia that to-day the Duke and his States were joined in a compact of concord, love, and unity!

"Leuchtmar," said the Elector, inclining toward the friend whom he had summoned from Sweden, on purpose to be present at this festivity—"Leuchtmar, in this hour the first germ of my future has put forth buds!"

"And a great forest will grow therefrom, a forest of myrtle and laurel, your highness!"

"Leave the myrtle to grow and bloom, Leuchtmar. I care not for that! But I want a rapid growth of laurel! I long for action; and one thing I will tell you, friend: to-day marks a new era of my life. Until now I have been forced to bear and temporize, to bow my head, and patiently accommodate myself to the arrogance and caprices of others. I was so small and all about me so great: I was nothing, they were everything! I must become a diplomatist in order to gain even ground enough on which to stand."

"And now you have gained ground. One title, at least, you have substantiated, and may now claim to be veritably Duke of Prussia. You have now won your position; and my Elector never recedes—he always moves forward!"

"Yes, from this day he moves forward!" cried the Elector, with enthusiasm. "Forward in the path of glory and renown! Hear you the ringing of bells and thundering of cannon! God bless Prussia, my Prussia of the future—my great, strong, mighty Prussia, as I feel she *will* become. To her I dedicate my life. Not in pride and vain ambition, but in genuine humility and devotion to my duty and my calling. I will

have nothing for myself, all for my people, for the honor of my God and the good of my country! In the discharge of my princely functions I shall be ever mindful that I guard not my own, but my people's interests. And this thought will give me strength and joy! This be the device of my whole future: *Pro deo et populo!*—For God and the people!"

"God save our Duke!" cried and shouted the people, as the Elector now descended the steps of the throne in order to return to the palace. "Blessings on our Duke!" cried also the representatives and deputies from the Prussian towns and provinces.

The Elector bowed to right and left, smilingly acknowledging their salutations. His heart swelled with joy and love as he saw all these glad, happy faces, the faces of his own people; and in the recesses of his soul he repeated his oath, to devote his whole life and being to his country—"*Pro deo et populo!*—For God and the people!"

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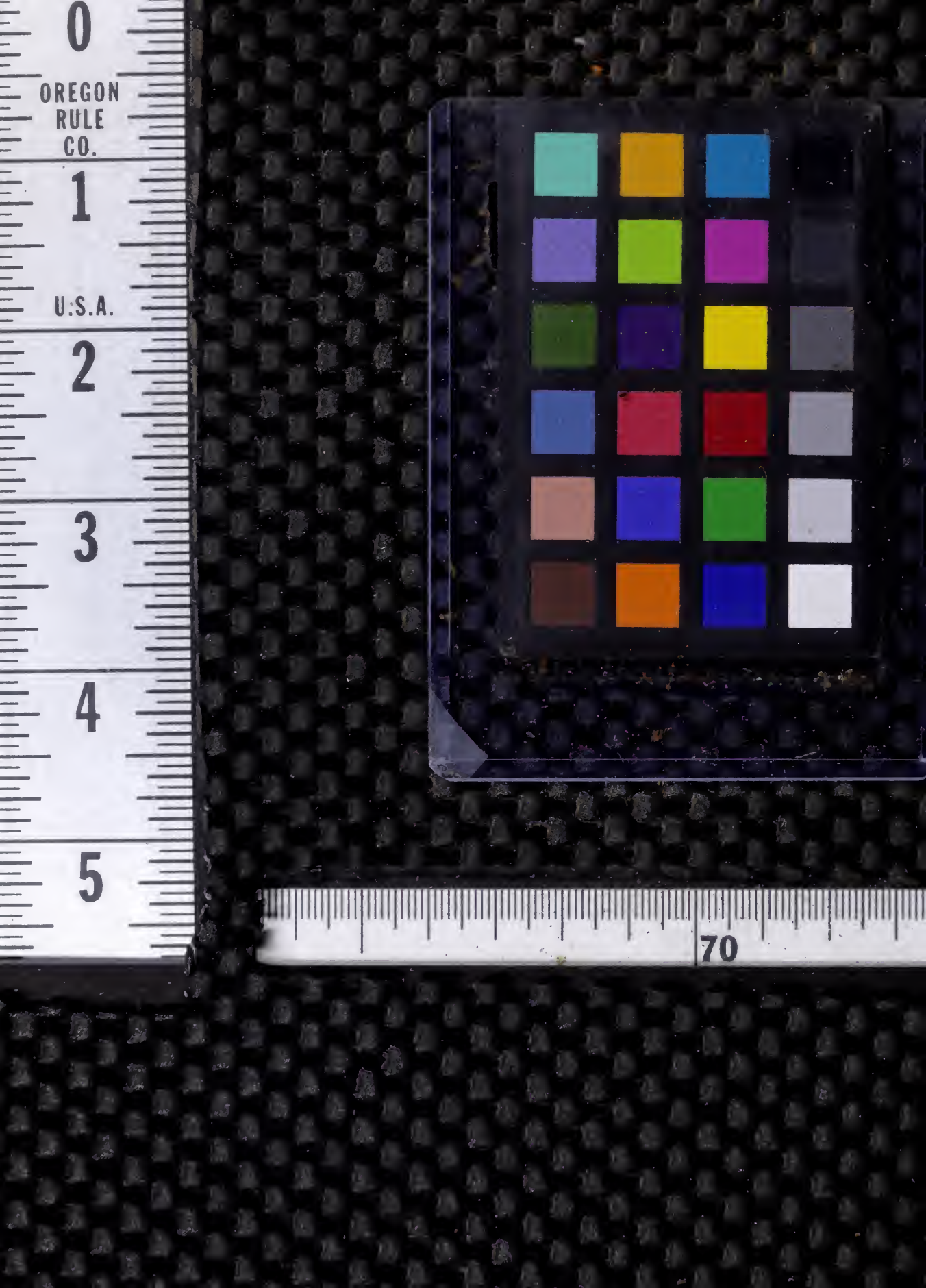
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